

**ASSESSING EMPOWERING AND DEGRADING FORMS OF
BLACK ENTERTAINMENT TO UNDERSTAND
IDEALIZED BLACK WOMANHOOD, CAREER DEVELOPMENT,
FAMILYFORMATION AND THE STEREOTYPES THEY EMBODY**

by

Camille Stephanie Moncrieffe

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of the University of Delaware in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in Sociology with Distinction.

Spring 2010

Copyright 2010 Camille S. Moncrieffe
All Rights Reserved

**ASSESSING EMPOWERING AND DEGRADING FORMS OF
BLACK ENTERTAINMENT TO UNDERSTAND
IDEALIZED BLACK WOMANHOOD, CAREER DEVELOPMENT,
FAMILY FORMATION AND THE STEREOTYPES THEY EMBODY**

by

Camille Stephanie Moncrieffe

Approved: _____
Maggie Ussery, Ph. D
Professor in charge of thesis on behalf of the Advisory Committee

Approved: _____
Antonia Randolph, Ph. D
Committee member from the Department of Sociology

Approved: _____
Barbara Settles, Ph. D
Committee member from the Board of Senior Thesis Readers

Approved: _____
Ismat Shah, Ph.D.
Chair of the University Committee on Student and Faculty Honors

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the memory of my father, Valentine Anthony Moncrieffe—a strong man who wasn’t educated but wanted to ensure a successful future for his children. He worked two jobs to provide his children with all their needs. His hard work will never be in vain and his spirit will always remain in my heart.

(November 15, 1963-April 20, 2003)

Dedicated to my grandmother, Joycelyn Rebecca Moncrieffe, who has always encouraged me to work hard in college, to never give up, and to stay focused.

(April 28, 1942-December 27, 2009)

Dedicated to my grandfather, Cleveland George Hinds—a hardworking West Indian immigrant who wanted to ensure his family’s success in America. I love you and your hard work will never become void.

(January 11, 1936-April 13, 2010)

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I say thank you to Professor Maggie Ussery from the Black American Studies Department for encouraging my creative mind set so that I might think out of the box and discover things that are blinded to everyday people. Thank you for pushing me beyond my limits, even in the midst of my adversities, to want to complete my thesis and challenge the mainstream viewpoints of people and media. Thank you for the support and advice granted to me about real life experiences; such as law school and graduate school. There are not a lot of Black female professors on University of Delaware's campus to support Black students in their college experiences, decisions, and future. I am just grateful that I am one of the very few Black students who were provided with this experience.

Thank you to Professor Antonia Randolph for the clarification and support granted to me. I really do view entertainment differently; especially music videos. Thank you Professor Barbara Settles for your support and advice. Thank you to the Undergraduate Research department for providing me with the experiences of research and the opportunity to discover truth for oneself.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|------------------------------|-------------|
| LIST OF TABLES | vii |
| LIST OF FIGURES | viii |
| ABSTRACT | ix |

Chapter

| | | |
|----------|--|-----------|
| 1 | INTRODUCTION..... | 1 |
| 2 | LITERATURE REVIEW: MEDIA FORMS AND IMPACT | 3 |
| | Media as a Printed and Electronic Medium..... | 3 |
| | Music Videos as an Electronic Form of Empowerment and Degradation..... | 6 |
| | Previous Research Analysis of Music Videos | 6 |
| | Stereotypes and Their Impact on Black Womanhood & Career..... | |
| | Development | 10 |
| | Stereotypes that Impact Family Formation..... | 13 |
| 3 | LITERATURE REVIEW: STEREOTYPES | 16 |
| | The Unattractive and Supportive Mammy..... | 16 |
| | The Loud Sapphire..... | 19 |
| | The Hypersexual Jezebel | 20 |
| | The Crazy Black Bitch..... | 22 |
| | The “Do It All” Superwoman | 23 |
| 4 | METHODS | 27 |
| | Historical Context of the Media..... | 28 |
| | <i>Essence</i> Magazine | 28 |
| | <i>VIBE</i> Magazine | 30 |
| | 106 th & Park Music Countdown | 30 |
| | Procedure | 31 |
| 5 | RESULTS | 38 |
| | <i>Essence</i> and <i>VIBE</i> Quantitative Analysis | 38 |
| | <i>Essence</i> and <i>VIBE</i> Qualitative Analysis | 41 |
| | Financial Independence..... | 41 |

| | | |
|---|---|----|
| | Career Development | 42 |
| | Family Formation | 44 |
| | Romantic Relationships | 45 |
| | Sexuality | 46 |
| | Black Womanhood | 47 |
| | Entertainment | 47 |
| | Other | 47 |
| | Music Video Quantitative Analysis | 48 |
| | Limitations | 53 |
| 6 | DISCUSSION | 55 |
| | Introduction | 55 |
| | Contrasting Stereotypes in Printed and Electronic Forms | 55 |
| | The Demographic Differences of Media Sources: Race, Gender, and Class ... | 57 |
| | The Distinction of Race | 58 |
| | The Distinction of Gender | 60 |
| | The Distinction of Class | 62 |
| | The Stereotypical Similarities between Media Sources | 65 |
| | <i>Essence</i> Magazine, the Dominant Superwoman Stereotype, and Secondary Mammy | 65 |
| | <i>VIBE</i> and Their Hypersexuality towards Black Women | 72 |
| | Music Videos as a Mixture of Historical Stereotypes | 75 |
| | Conclusion/Implications | 81 |
| | REFERENCES | 82 |

LIST OF TABLES

| | |
|---|----|
| Table 1 Stereotypes | 34 |
| Table 2 Sample Music Video Demographic Information | 36 |
| Table 2 Continued: Sample Music Video Demographic Information | 37 |

LIST OF FIGURES

| | |
|---|----|
| Figure 1. <i>Essence</i> Magazine Total Pie Chart | 40 |
| Figure 2. <i>VIBE</i> Magazine Total Pie Chart | 41 |
| Figure 3. Frequencies of Historical Stereotypes | 49 |
| Figure 4. Women's Relationship with Black Men..... | 50 |
| Figure 5. Music Video Public/Private Settings and Functions | 51 |
| Figure 6. Sample <i>Essence</i> Magazine Covers | 66 |
| Figure 7. Oprahization | 67 |
| Figure 8. <i>Essence</i> Magazine Family Formations | 69 |
| Figure 9. <i>Essence</i> Magazine Sisterhood & Mentoring Relationships..... | 71 |
| Figure 10. Sample <i>VIBE</i> Magazine Covers | 73 |

ABSTRACT

This study explores the effects of mass media stereotypes of Black women on the creation of Black womanhood in association with work and family formation. My research explores the distortion of Black womanhood through a content analysis of electronic and printed media. Research methods consist of content analysis of two popular magazines, *Essence* and *VIBE* magazines, and music videos from the 106th & Park Top Ten Countdown. This study provides an in-in-depth analysis of the constructions of Black women and the implications it has on idealized Black womanhood. Results indicated that stereotypes are prevalent in Black entertainment. However, stereotypes depend on the form of media presented. In distributing Black media assessed, there is a construction of Black womanhood through the idealized nuclear family and career.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

This research explores stereotypes of Black women portrayed in the mass media. Research questions investigated how media stereotypes affect the depiction of Black womanhood in magazines and music videos targeted to adolescents and young adults. This study explores the impact of the depictions of Black womanhood through a content analysis. A mixed methods content analysis was utilized to evaluate images and articles from *Essence* and *VIBE* magazines and music videos from 106th and Park. These sources were chosen because of their popularity. The articles were analyzed for themes related to stereotypes of family formation, career development, and Black womanhood. The magazines were chosen because of their targeted audiences: *Essence* magazine caters to Black women and *VIBE* targets younger Black men and women. The content analysis was completed on articles published between June 2003 and June 2008. This date was chosen to provide the most recent data available.

Research goals include comprehension and interpretation of the media's construction of Black womanhood and to examine the stereotypes that shape the depiction of Black women in the media. It was hypothesized that stereotypes will be prevalent throughout both media; however, it will be indirect with the printed media. Additionally, stereotypes will be more explicit in electronic forms, such as the music

videos, since they are popular forms of entertainment and are geared to younger women and men. Coding themes were centered on different categories revolving career, family, and womanhood. These themes are directly related to the research questions because they provide data on the actual construction of womanhood.

This research provides an in-depth analysis of the impact of stereotypical constructions of Black womanhood and the media's depiction of the career aspirations and predicted outcomes of Black women. Through assessment of the results, the powerful actors within society, especially those controlling the entertainment industry, will be able to better manage the images presented throughout media that impact the daily lives of Black girls and women. The images presented throughout media negatively impact the perception of racial groups. Such distorted perceptions influence the development and interactions between societal groups. The powerful actors should be aware of these dynamics and attempt to positively influence the perception and relations of societal groups to create an onward and progressive society and promote equality.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW: MEDIA FORMS AND IMPACT

Media as a Printed and Electronic Medium

Media stereotypes come in many different forms. In fact, many critics question the availability of different quality media and their influence on diverse segments of the population. Media can come in printed, electronic, and audio forms; however, the question of who controls these sources of media is central to understanding their content? Who are their audiences? What messages are conveyed to the audiences and how are they interpreting these images? Historically, printed medium was heavily relied on for messages about specific cultural imagery (Jewell 33). By the twentieth century, people increasingly depended on the electronic media, such as the radio and movies. By the 1950s, television was the primary source and it became the most impressive and influential medium. Media's popularity makes it a source that is highly depended upon for social representations or stereotypes of groups that are present to this current day. However, the influences of media are highly dependent on its actual form. For instance, the older generation prefers traditional forms of media (e.g. newspaper); in contrast, the younger generation fancies electronic forms, such as movies and music videos (Jewell 33).

The printed medium, usually in the form of comics, literature, newspaper articles, and magazines, has been in existence the longest. Existing research suggests that

stereotyping impacts the way Black women think about their womanhood and sexuality. Stereotypes are mental images or representations of categorized group members, attitudes, and behaviors (Reynolds-Dobbs 134). Such prejudiced ideology can be either unconscious or with awareness. The printed medium throughout history has constructed and perpetuated cultural images of Black womanhood developed by slave owners to justify slavery. For instance, the Jezebel stereotype was used by slave owners as a justification for the rape and sexual exploitation of slave women (West 462). Still, Jewell (1993) argues that Blacks had opportunities to portray Black women from a micro cultural perspective through the printed media because of independent Black-owned newspapers and magazines. In the printed press, there was a greater range of cultural images, which were attributed to the Black press, which included Black writers and artists who despite their limited resources produced poems, articles, newspapers, journals, books, and paintings. The Black press' construction and reproduction of their own cultural images established an alternative imagery for Black women to define Black womanhood. For example, *Essence Magazine* targets Black women and is concerned with the specific cultural and emotional needs of Blacks and women. *Essence Magazine* provides women with various images of Black womanhood. Additionally, *Essence* dispels stereotypical images of Black women and "it works to liberate Black women from the structures imposed on them by a world in which they live as an undervalued and marginalized minority (Woodard & Mastin 265).

However, in spite of the Black press' and Black artists' and writers' constant efforts to recreate positive cultural imagery of Black women, members of the dominant

society are almost exclusively depend upon mainstream media for cultural representations of Black women. Thus, efforts to eliminate the negative images and the concomitant stereotypes' influence upon societal perception of Black women have become limited (Jewell 71-73).

In this generation, the electronic media are preferred and thus are the most important forms in portraying images of Black women. The traditional stereotypical cultural imagery are utilized frequently, and as a result of limited access and resources by Black producers, it has become difficult to produce television programs, or movies that contain negative representative images of Black women. Consequently, these traditional stereotypes portray Black women's physical attributes as consistent with images of European American women (Jewell 30). Such imagery is an explanation of the looking-glass self, where an individual sees oneself as others view her. The looking glass self theory is a sociological concept where a person's sense of self develops through societal interactions and dominant perceptions by others. Consequently, an individual's identity is established through this dominant societal construct of her group and the individual begins to view herself according to the perception of societal members (Jewell 33). Many psychologists argue that Blacks overall, view themselves through imagery in media, which impacts their ability to develop positive self-concepts and reference groups' identifications (Jewell 33). Thus, Blacks internalize these stereotypes and produce behaviors that reinforce them. Music videos are an important form of media to discuss and analyze because they present the many positive and negative meanings of stereotypes presented in electronic media; which can be internalized.

Music Videos as an Electronic Form of Empowerment and Degradation

Music videos are a very popular form of electronic media and they are very influential in constructing perceptions of groups, in this case, Black women. As a result of their popularity, there is a lot of competition for these objectified characters in music videos. There is a very specific criterion that is required to gain exposure in music videos. The women are usually favored when they are fair-skinned, ethnically mixed, with long, straight, or curly haired, with demonstrates hypersexuality and accessible sexuality (Whiting 26-27). In other words, a Black women's objectification denotes any form of restricted sexuality. The majority of women in music videos represent what Tiffany Patterson, an historian, defines as "ascriptive mulattas (Whiting 26)."

Specifically, ascriptive mulattas are women who possess characteristics that are ethnically-mixed, possibly to the point where their ethnic origin is unclear. Ironically, the "mulatta" figure was once considered tragic because of her "in-between" racial status. Yet, currently, the "mulatta" has been deemed the ideal for Black feminine beauty. Such a "mulatta" figure is desirable to American men because she is the perfect blend of "Black" and "white", she is thought to be skillful with her sexuality (Black) and she also possess an idealized physical beauty (white) (Whiting 27-28).

Previous Research Analysis of Music Videos

Emerson (2002) and Oware (2009) both conducted studies that compared the empowerment and degradation of women in music videos. They found evidence of stereotyping and objectification of Black women. Emerson (2002) investigated how

representations of Black women in music videos reproduce stereotypical images of womanhood and how Black women performers utilize music videos as a source to oppose hegemonic, racist, and sexist notions of Black femininity (119). Emerson (2002) found evidence of stereotypes and controlling images of Black women, but also concluded that despite evidence of objectification and exploitation, Black female artists still demonstrate forms of contestation, resistance, and agency. She concludes that music videos exaggerate women's bodies. Women performers were expected to fulfill the dominant requirements of physical attractiveness and beauty, such as the "mulatta" figure; but the performers were objectified and their physical attractiveness was used as a means for attracting men's desires. Additionally, Emerson (2002) found a lack of variability in body forms and weight as overweight and pregnant women were not viewed as desirable (123). Thus, there are some music videos that present an alternative form to an idealized Black femininity.

As Emerson's (2002) results indicate, the standards for beauty were also influenced by the producers. Emerson (2002) found that many of the female performers had a male producer, which unfortunately, had a great impact on the final musical product, and thus, controlled the artists' creativity and the content of their songs and videos. In fact, the producer and company executives frequently undermined the female artist's autonomy by determining the choice of video director and contributing to the construction of the artist's appearance and content of music videos (124). However, Emerson (2002) also found evidence that Black female performers, despite objectification and exploitation by producers, still contested and resisted the assertion of

a patriarchic Black femininity. In their music videos, they demonstrated that being a Black woman signified strength, power, and a positive identity. Black women performers, despite their role-playing in traditional gender scripts in music videos, were depicted as active, vocal, and independent. Essentially, Black women were perceived as defining their own identity and life outcomes. Another major component of Black womanhood portrayed in music videos was sisterhood and partnership. When women artists collaborated, there was a sense of community and collectivity, and thus, demonstrating the necessity of guidance and support from other female artists to achieve success in the recording industry (124-127).

Black female artists and performers have always been constructed as the “other” in the music industry. They are even sometimes perceived as nonhuman: Black women in music videos usually possessed features that were animalistic, commoditized, or objectified and they were portrayed as “overly sexualized, devoid of [her] physical, emotional, and psychic components” (Oware 788). Consequently, relaying the message that Black women are solely sexual objects meant to be degraded and dominated. On the other hand, Oware (2009) found evidence that Black female rappers use self-objectification and self-exploitation, and that they use derogatory terms towards other female rappers while simultaneously embodying empowering messages, and thus, creating a contradiction (786). Oware (2009) described that “these contradictory messages...nullify the empowering messages that are conveyed and only reproduce and uphold male hegemonic notions of femininity” (786).

Oware (2009) analyzed forty-four different songs by female rap artists. The songs discussed issues ranging from domestic violence, independence, agency, and sexuality from a woman's perspective. Oware (2009) categorized her findings into six of the following concepts: Bravado/Braggadocio, Alcohol and Drug Consumption, Dissin', Female Empowerment and Agency, Female Sexuality, and the Reclamation of "Bitch".

When a rap artist gets involved in verbal self-aggrandizement and brags about her expensive possessions, she is engaging in bravado. In addition, lyrically, artists would boost about overcoming challenges and their achieved material successes. In regards to alcohol and drug consumption, it is a common theme in the songs of many female rap artists. In the sample, there was an average of one-and-a-half citations made towards drugs or alcohol. "Dissin" involves verbally insulting a female opponent or as a female response to sexism and bravado in rap music. The average song included three insults. In regards to female empowerment, some of the songs also consisted of concerns that are serious; such as domestic violence, deadly relationships, and rejecting stereotypical notions of gender and sex roles; such acts of the oppressing forms of patriarchy "is itself reclaiming power [and] undermining male control and domination" (Oware 794). Under normal circumstances, many Black women embraced their sexuality privately. However, in the female sexuality category, Oware (2009) found that female rappers usually presented themselves as being hypersexualized. Female rappers like Lil' Kim creates an empowering sexuality as she rejects males' desires, and instead, gains sexual gratification from the sexual encounter. Additionally, rappers like Trina actually dominate and control the sexual relationships with her male partners. In the Reclamation of "Bitch" category

Oware (2009) concluded that *bitch* is defined as a person with lyrical skill or someone who can inspire and motivate an audience. The term *bitch* signifies a positive and strong woman who deals with no nonsense; creating influential images of very aggressive and sexualized Black women. Essentially, these images are perpetuating the objectification and stereotypes of Black female artists in the electronic forms of media.

There are gendered boundaries that need to be considered in music videos. This is especially true in Hip-Hop where the areas of production, promotion, and performance are managed to maintain male hegemony. When women use the same stereotypes of roughness and profanity as men they are often ostracized from the Hip-Hop industry; there are, however, exceptions. Despite the treatment of women in the Hip-Hop industry, these empowering and degrading images of Black women in music videos still influence the perceptions of Black womanhood and its contents (Kelley 70). This is especially valid for the younger generation where music videos play an incremental role in culture as they portray success and limitations of Black women. This research sought to critique these dominant stereotypes and their impact on the perception of Black womanhood in music videos.

Stereotypes and Their Impact on Black Womanhood & Career Development

There is a system implemented by and within the mass media that cultivates dominant cultural images of Black women. Powerful people monopolize their power and use their resources, such as mass media and societal institutions, to maintain their privileged status (Jewel 1). These powerful people, through their practicing of dominant

ideology, create stereotypical dominant images, and construct belief systems, norms, and values that are utilized to negatively interpret non-mainstream cultures (Jewell 4-5). For instance, the belief in meritocracy asserts that an individual's rewards are proportionate with their investments. However, many sociologists would argue that an individual's ability to invest or produce is a combined result of specified ascribed qualities such as race, gender, and socioeconomic status, and achieved statuses like education and occupation (Jewell 4-5). As Jewell asserts:

This belief system uses race, gender, and class to explain achievement and why different groups of individuals have more or less access to wealth and power...race, ethnicity, gender, and class are the primary factors that are used to explain differential access to societal resources. These same qualities have also become systems of division and domination which protect the interests of those who mediate societal resources and institutions. (Jewell 4)

Essentially, distortions of Black women in mass media, according to these cultural dominant images, can severely impact the portrayal of Black womanhood, Black work aspirations, and Black family formation (Jewell 10). These distortions create stereotypes that generalize a group's characteristics.

Stereotypes are embedded in all forms of media; whether printed or electronic. Stereotypes are mental images or representations of a categorized group's members, attitudes, and behaviors. Sometimes it is difficult to change stereotypical perception because they can occur without conscious intent or awareness. Unfortunately, stereotypes impact power structures in personal conversations and interactions (West 458). Essentially, negative images and stereotypes of Black women are reinforced as

Whites, the dominant group in society, may have fewer interactions with minority group members, and thus, may rely on stereotypical images to define and categorize minority group members. As a result, Whites' perceptions can be distorted (Reynolds-Dobbs et al. 134). Specifically for this research, stereotypes can have an impact on how Black women are viewed and evaluated by others on their initiation in the workforce (Reynolds-Dobbs et al. 132). Additionally, the popular culture and media can perpetuate these stereotypes that foster reality about Black womanhood and family formation (West 458). Thus, media has a powerful impact on people's perceptions; of all races. In fact, Blacks can internalize racism, which is defined as people who internalize societal stereotypes, and thus idealize the dominant population and their culture (Thomas et al. 430).

Stereotypes that are internalized or embedded within perception can also impact Black women's career opportunities and aspirations. Statistics shows that women of color are becoming more visible in the workplace, however, because of their triple marginality (sexism, racism, and colorism—differences in treatment based on skin tone), Black women confront barriers that delay professional growth (Reynolds-Dobbs et al. 130). White women also experience barriers in professional environments as they must tackle the glass ceiling, however "women of color often face a concrete ceiling, which is even harder and more challenging stumbling block to overcome" (qtd. by Catalyst in Reynolds-Dobbs, Thomas, and Harrison 129-130). Glass ceiling is defined as the invisible barriers that minorities confront as they are promoted in a corporate hierarchy. The Civil Rights Act of 1991 mandate identified the glass ceiling barriers that have blocked minorities' advancement in workplaces. Despite identical educational attainment

of men and women, men still advance faster than women (Federal Glass Ceiling Commission 88-90). Consequently, both White and Black women experience lack of network opportunities, mentors, and high-visibility assignments, however, women of color have a unique experience to these deficiencies; especially because of barriers due to the concrete ceiling (Reynolds-Dobbs et al. 130).

According to societal images and expectations, Black women are perceived as “dominant, aggressive, sexually promiscuous, rebellious, rude, and loud” (Thomas, Witherspoon, & Speight 428). In fact, there are three historical stereotypes derived from slavery—Mammy, Sapphire, and Jezebel—that impact contemporary Black women (428). Additionally, there are two historical, but recently established stereotypes—the Crazy Black Bitch and Superwoman—that are definitely embedded in contemporary American media. Although discussed separately, stereotypes are not mutually exclusive. Additionally, internalization depends on the location and circumstances (i.e. family interactions, work situations, or social activities), but these images have impacted the representations of Black women throughout contemporary America (West 463).

Stereotypes that Impact Family Formation

A family’s environment significantly influences an individual’s future career. There are both external and internal components that contribute to the social setting of an environment. Externally, identity is defined through sociological terms; such as race, class, religion, ethnicity, practices, and beliefs. However, internally, an individual’s psychological state is of more importance. Psychologically, children develop their self-

identity, learn about their relations to others, and formulate a social network (Freeman 18).

A child's future career opportunities and perception of Black womanhood are usually dependent upon their parents' experiences, behaviors, and instruction, which often times varies by gender. Frequently, parents' messages for their child's future reflect their attitudes about their own self-identity. For instance, mothers who serve as caretakers and are dissatisfied with their careers are likely to encourage their children to participate in the workforce (Freeman 18). Additionally, mothers with such experiences are likely to portray the Superwoman stereotype where a woman must be able to take care of her family and work responsibilities. Essentially, she must "do it all" (Reynolds-Dobbs et al 139).

One of the solutions to diminishing stereotypes that impact family formation is through Black feminism. Morgan resorts to feminism as a means of diffusing biases and stereotypes within in the media. However, Morgan mentions a specific type of feminism. She defines feminism as making the welfare of Black women and Black community a priority. Additionally, feminism is encouraging black-on-black love as a means of survival. Morgan states:

"Racism and the will to survive it create a sense of intra-racial loyalty that makes it impossible for black women to turn our backs on black men—even in their ugliest and most sexist of moments. [We need] a feminism that would allow us to continue loving ourselves and the brothers who hurt us without letting race loyalty buy us early tombstones." (Morgan 36)

She wants a “feminism that would allow [Black women to] explore who they are as women—not victims. One that claimed the powerful richness and delicious complexities inherent in being black girls now—sistas of the post—Civil Rights, post-feminist, post soul, hip-hop generation.” (Morgan 56-57) The current generation, as daughters of feminist privilege, is fortunate to acquire many gains of the Feminist Movement. In fact, these privileges have such a tremendous impact on our lives that we take them for granted. We acknowledge a sense of entitlement. So much that many women currently could not imagine living without access to birth control, legalized abortions, the right to vote, and educational and employment opportunities that were once only available to men. (Morgan 59)

Chapter 3

LITERATURE REVIEW: STEREOTYPES

Stereotypes are mental images or representations of categorized group members, attitudes, and behaviors (Reynolds-Dobbs 134). Stereotypes are important to study and recognize because they can occur unconsciously or consciously. Specifically, for this research, stereotypes can construct some characteristics of Black womanhood, decisions in the workplace, and family formations. The characteristics of these stereotypes are included in coding schemes to seize the essence of stereotypes throughout data.

The Unattractive and Supportive Mammy

The Mammy is portrayed as an obese, dark-skinned Black woman who often neglects herself and her family to satisfy the needs of her slave-owners, and post slavery, her employers. She is not often portrayed in popular media culture, there are exceptions; such as Eddie Murphy in “The Nutty Professor” (1996), Martin Lawrence in “Big Momma’s House” (2000), and Tyler Perry’s Madea series. Although the Mammy is not frequently displayed throughout media, including music videos, it must be emphasized that it is still present.

The Mammy is a Black woman who is portrayed as submissive. The Mammy was selfless as she took care of others' needs while neglecting her own and her family's. She was perceived as nonthreatening and nurturing and was expected to be a problem solver by Whites. Consequently, the Mammy stereotype has contributed to the subordinate, nurturing, supportive, strong, and self-sacrificing image of Black women (Thomas 429). Her physical characteristics are associated with masculinity. The Mammy is depicted as obese, dark in complexion, with large breasts and buttocks, and white teeth. She is usually satisfied with her position in life, typically performing domestic duties. The Mammy image was once used to contradict critics who asserted slavery was harsh and demeaning, a slave "she was seen as happy and contented with life" (Jewell 38-39). The large buttocks and breasts place the Mammy in the realm of maternal nurturance, and thus, ejecting Black women from the sphere of sexual desirability by men because her form deviates from the "mulatta" (Jewell 40). In fact, Black women who embody the Mammy stereotype may define themselves according to their relationships with others, and thus, base their happiness, satisfaction, and well-being on the status of others (Thomas 437). The internalization of the Mammy stereotype can lead to a poor self-concept (Thomas et al. 429). It can also impact the psychological conditions of Black women. The stereotype may lead to concerns with eating patterns, physical features, and conflicts with work and family (West 460).

The Mammy image is deeply rooted in southern culture; for instance, the United Daughters of American Confederacy (UDC) in the early 1900s attempted to erect a bronze monument to pay homage to the Mammy's loyalty. Specifically, the UDC

attempted to establish a monument to the “faithful colored slaves of the South erected in the shadow of Lincoln’s memorial” (McElya 116). Initially, the United States Senate agreed with the UDC to erect a national memorial of the Mammy, and thus, authorized the grant in 1923. Protests from Black organizations and individuals halted the completion of the project. Protestors believed the Mammy memorial would not represent a heroic figure, but rather memorialize a stigmatized representation of Black women. Essentially, the Mammy memorial controversy was a debate over the meanings and representations of the image for Black women and not the UDC intentions (McElya 116-117). In the UDC’s perspective, the Mammy monument represented interracial amity as the Mammy demonstrated genuine affection and unconditional maternal love for her white masters. However, resisters of the monument argued that through popular representation, the Mammy was faithful and committed because she was satisfied with her enslavement and white supremacy (McElya 141). The memorial demonstrated a form of control of Black women and their image by former slave masters. The Black press was the primary source of resistance towards the Mammy memorial. Furthermore, resistance to the monument was multifaceted and crossed racial lines. Some white individuals, organizations, and publications opposed the monument proposal. For instance, the Women’s Relief Corp’s (WRC) challenged the monument as the money used to erect the statue would be better utilized to aid in bettering the conditions and environments of the Mammy’s children (McElya 155).

In the workplace, the Mammy usually advocates for other Black co-workers. The Mammy is capable of completing her assignments; however, her emotional and nurturing

characteristics may distort her professional strengths. Instead of promotion, Mammies exemplify the support systems in the workplace. As a result, the nurturing and supportive features, even though are positive, are not viewed as leadership qualities (Reynolds-Dobbs et al. 137).

The Loud Sapphire

The Sapphire is the “typical” Black woman who doesn’t take nonsense from any man, woman, or authority figure. She is seen as a very controversial woman. She utilizes her loudness and sassiness to gain authority. Such characteristics could lead to various physical and mental disabilities because of the constant frustration. The Sapphire is prevalent in all forms of media.

Black women with loud, emasculative, and argumentative features are termed Sapphires. The Sapphire is “the master of verbal insults” (Thomas et al. 429). She is known for her sassiness. The Sapphire originated in the 1940’s and 1950’s in the media portrayal of the “Amos and Andy” radio show (West 461). Jewell (1993) describes a Sapphire as having “the fierce independence of mammy...in conjunction with a proclivity for being loquacious, headstrong and omniscient...Her sheer existence is predicated upon the presence of the corrupt Black male whose lack of integrity, and use of cunning and trickery provides her with an opportunity to emasculate him through her use of verbal put-downs” (45). Essentially, Sapphire delights in criticizing Black men for their irresponsibility and deception. Her characterization also involves arrogance, hostility, loathsome, the need to control, and never obtaining satisfaction. Subsequently,

such features cause the Sapphire to be comedic and not taken seriously. Black women who internalize this stereotype usually have problems when displaying frustration or expressing their needs. Thus, the Sapphire may assume that the only solution to her problems is to be loud, aggressive, or rageful (Thomas et al. 429). Additionally, when the Sapphire is internalized, Black women may assume accountability for the uneasiness and fright of others, and thus, change their behavior in an effort to appear non-threatening when interacting with other ethnic groups (West 461-462).

In the workplace, Sapphires are talkative, dramatic, and bossy Black women that continuously complain. Additionally, her most famous characteristic is the ability to respond to people with assertiveness. In the workplace, Sapphire contrasts the supportive and nurturing Mammy. Her hard and tough act overshadows her talents and professional skills. This hardcore act also makes it hard for the Sapphire to reject dirty jobs; such as the telling off of unruly customers. Sometimes her outspoken or aggressive personality can result in marginality in an organization as co-workers begin to respond to her behavior rather than job performance. As a result, the Sapphire may consider being soft-spoken to reduce being viewed as confrontational or threatening (Reynolds-Dobbs 141-142).

The Hypersexual Jezebel

Many of the music video dancers and actresses portray the hypersexualized Jezebel stereotype. This is the reasoning behind music video performers being named “video chicks”, “chickenheads”, or “video hoes” (Morgan). Jezebel has a tremendous

impact on the definition of Black womanhood as it models the idealized sexuality for Black women. Her sexuality would make it hard to form relationships in her personal life and at the workplace.

The Jezebel is a Black woman portrayed as a mulatta or as fair-complexioned and who possesses characteristics that resemble Europeans and the accepted dominant standards of beauty. Such features equate to thin lips, long straight hair, slender nose, slim figure, and fair complexion (Jewell 46). The stereotype of Jezebel, also termed “the bad-Black-girl,” is of a woman perceived as seductive, manipulative, hypersexual, and animalistic in her desires: she is depicted as unable to control her sexuality (Thomas 429). The Jezebel stereotype originated from the sexual exploitation and victimization of Black women by white male slave owners who had control over Black women’s sexuality and reproduction (West 462). The Jezebel persona was justification for sexual relations with slave owners. Since Jezebel had “an insatiable appetite for sex,” her hypersexuality “takes the blame for any sexual relationship she might have with men, especially White men” (Reynolds-Dobbs et al. 137). Internalization of the Jezebel stereotype may cause Black women to repress their sexuality which can impact identity development and result in sexual dysfunction. (Thomas et al. 429-430). The frequent perpetuation of the Jezebel stereotype only reinforces and justifies sexual mistreatment. The stereotype asserts that Black women cannot be sexually exploited as a result of their uncontrolled sexual nature. Furthermore, a lack of credibility is bestowed on Black women, which explains why they are prone to wait longer to expose a sexual assault than white women (West 463).

The modern day Jezebel in the corporate world is perceived as an overly aggressive Black woman who will sacrifice and do anything to achieve success. Jezebel is usually viewed as unqualified because she used her sexuality to obtain promotions. Her credibility, authority, and skills are questioned. Reynolds-Dobbs (2008) states, “instead of people viewing a professional Black woman as being competent, talented, and business minded, she may be viewed as someone who slept her way to the top—doing anything to achieve career success” (137). Additionally, Jezebel’s perceived promiscuity makes it difficult to maintain relationships with men, specifically White men, who could be potential mentors (Reynolds-Dobbs 140).

The Crazy Black Bitch

The Crazy Black Bitch (CBB) is a woman who lacks integrity. CBB also has trouble establishing promotional relationships in the workplace because of her strong personality. The CBB is prevalent in the mass media and often seen as a comedic relief in reality shows.

The CBB refers to a Black woman who is overly aggressive and cannot be trusted by others. She is lazy, unprofessional, and argumentative. One of the CBB major qualities is not being able to work in a team environment. The CBB has difficulty maintaining relationships, and since her loyalty is nonexistent, she will do anything to achieve success (Reynolds-Dobbs et al. 138). The CBB is smart, competent, and independent, however, such characteristics does not stop Black women from experiencing barriers in the workplace. Instead, the CBB stereotype is utilized as

justification for Black women to experience glass/concrete ceilings because their personalities do not demonstrate good leadership qualities. Essentially, the CBB is viewed as unfriendly, unstable, argumentative, and selfish, which makes co-workers and other leaders resistant to their career advancement. The CBB is qualified for the leadership position, but the negative stereotype can overshadow her talents and competence (Reynolds-Dobbs 142).

The “Do It All” Superwoman

A Black woman who has no fears, insecurities, or weakness is the Superwoman. She risks psychological distress when demonstrating failure. The Superwoman is prevalent everywhere; especially at college campuses and workplaces. The Superwoman is highly successful and her achievements are accepted

The Superwoman stereotype is a new image that emerged for middle-class professional Black women. Feminist scholar, Michelle Wallace, defines the Superwoman as “a Black woman who can handle large amounts of distasteful work and does not have the same fears, weaknesses, or insecurities as other women” (Reynolds-Dobbs et al. 138). The original Super Black Woman (SBW) and her assumed “super strength” was a myth created by whites to rationalize their brutality. The contemporary SBW, however, is our internalization of such a rationalization as she can obtain any achievements despite her challenges (Morgan 100-101). The Superwomen usually possess qualities that embody intelligence, professionalism, independence, strength, assertiveness, and talent. She is capable of completing work assignments and “expected

to do it all” (Reynolds-Dobbs et al. 139). When not successful at a task, the Superwoman demonstrates signs of weakness and feels like a failure. The internalization of the Superwoman can lead to a high level of self-esteem, however, once cracked, expose anxiety and low self-esteem (Thomas et al. 430).

Joan Morgan (1995), a Black feminist, describes the Superwoman as one with inordinate strength and with the capability of sustaining through horrendous amounts of misery and distasteful work. The Superwoman is unique as her fears, weaknesses, and insecurities are not comparable to any ordinary woman. In fact, she can be emotionally stronger than most men (87). She could “handle any life crisis, be the dependable rock for every soul who needed me, and, yes, the classic—require less from my lovers than they did from me because after all, I was a STRONGBLACKWOMAN and they were just ENDANGEREDBLACKMEN.” (Morgan 87)

The Superwoman is unlike the CBB. She is the high-powered and overachiever employee that qualify for candidacy for advancement. The Superwoman is viewed as having exceptional leadership qualities. Contrary to the CBB, the Superwoman is flexible, friendly, and a dedicated employee. These characteristics may seem positive and uplifting to a Black woman’s advancement in an organization, however, there are a couple of negatives. Firstly, the Superwoman is frequently isolated because of her exceptional talents. She is seen as a threat because the Superwoman does not conform to the negative stereotypical images. Secondly, because of the Superwoman’s exceptional qualities she is expected to do everything. Often, Black women in leadership positions are requested to do more than they are required with little support; especially because of

their double marginality, Black women are placed on special committees. Although being an overachiever is not a bad quality, it can be damaging and unhealthy as the Superwoman tries to fulfill unrealistic expectations (Reynolds-Dobbs 143).

The unattractive Mammy, loud Sapphire, hypersexual Jezebel, crazy Black bitch, and the “do it all” superwoman are stereotypes that are embedded within dominant forms of media and perpetuate the negative images of Black women. Printed and electronic media, in their degrading and empowering forms, have their influences on the establishing the idealized black womanhood, career development, and family formation. The prevalence of these stereotypes and their forms need to be assessed so that people can be aware of their occurrence.

Investigating these historical images is important to understanding the constructions of Black womanhood in media. Stereotypes also influence the conditions of a Black woman’s life in different aspects of living. For instance, stereotypes impact the conditions of women in the workplace and the community. Therefore, it is important to study the implications for these historical stereotypes.

Stereotypes are a set of assumptions about a particular group or culture that frames a certain perception. Stereotypes can impact the actors within society in various ways. One of the major ways is internalization. This is really important to note because stereotypes can be performed unconsciously or with awareness (West 458). This study seeks to investigate the effects of such internalizations; specifically with conceptions of career development and family formation of Black women. It is important to note that these stereotypes are historical, even though they are still prevalent in current forms of

media. Consequently, they have been internalized for centuries and there needs to be a progressive effort taken by those in control of media throughout history to create alternate forms of Black women. Magazines targeted to marginalized audiences need to be critical of the portrayal of marginalized groups; especially Black women.

Chapter 4

METHODS

To investigate the stereotypes embedded within media, a content analysis was performed on electronic and printed forms of media. Although there is still a debate as to which form of media has the most significant impact upon its viewers, both forms were analyzed. Essentially, a form of media might dominate another, however, they are both attracting viewers who are diverse in viewership. To serve as a representative of printed medium, *Essence* Magazine and *VIBE* Magazines were of particular interest. Music videos from 106th and Park on Black Television Entertainment were chosen as representation for the electronic form of media. Sources were chosen because of their targeted audiences. *Essence* Magazine was analyzed because it is targeted to Black women. *VIBE* magazine targets Black men; while 106th & Park music videos target viewers from a diverse background. Despite their targeted audiences, these media sources also attract audiences from the dominant population. Additionally, the differences of printed and electronic media are apparent as they contain different associations to stereotypes. The printed media demonstrates stereotypes in an indirect fashion; while electronic media displays stereotypes in a more direct approach as there are visual. The media's differential relationships to these stereotypes can be a limitation in this study.

Historical Context of the Media

In order to understand the content of a source there needs to be a context, which helps to comprehend the findings of the content analysis. Specifically, historical context provides relevance as it might direct researchers to some of the causes of the prevalent stereotypes embedded within media.

Essence Magazine

Essence Magazine was founded in 1970. It is the first popular magazine for Black women and has lasted the longest. Four Black men founded *Essence Magazine*. Edward Lewis, Jonathan Blount, Cecil Hollingsworth, and Clarence Smith were devoted to providing Black women with a magazine that would “speak in [their] name and in [their] voice...and it would provide delight and celebrate the beauty, pride, strength, and uniqueness of all Black women” (Rooks 143). However, two of these men decided to sell their portion (forty-nine percent) to Time Warner Communications. Nevertheless, *Essence Magazine* still is edited by Black women, however not owned by them.

When *Essence* was first established, it professed a Black Nationalist rhetoric where Black unity and independence from the dominant society was a central theme. *Essence* rejected mainstream feminism; and instead, it targeted Black women who were to be warriors fighting against discrimination and for equal rights of Blacks. Black women reading *Essence* magazine were “strong women” that supported their men, consequently, rejecting dominant constructions of femininity. Such a Black nationalist perspective was demonstrated in *Essence*’s first issue where they featured an article

entitled “Revolt: From Rosa to Kathleen (Rooks 144).” The articles discussed Black women’s involvement in the Civil Rights movements. This included women like Rosa Parks who participated in the non-violent social protest movement of the 1960s and Kathleen Cleaver who was involved in a militant group, the Black Panther Party, as indicated by the issue’s title. However, as time progressed, *Essence* magazine would transfer their focus from Black power/nationalist content to articles focusing on celebrities, fashion, and beauty. By the mid-1970s, *Essence*’s articles concentrated on content dealing with clothes, travel, and cosmetics (Rooks 144-48). In fact, in the current publications, *Essence* Magazine is geared toward Black women who are career-minded, sophisticated, and independent achievers. The actual magazine incorporates articles focusing on career and educational opportunities, fashion, beauty, health, fitness, parenting, food, and travel. Essentially, *Essence* has goals of empowering Black women and selling status products.

For the majority of the articles analyzed, Susan L. Taylor was *Essence*’s editor. However, after thirty-seven years as editor, Taylor decided to leave so that she could focus on her own organization, *Essence* Cares, geared to helping troubled children and building the National Cares Mentoring Movement. Taylor is a remarkable woman as she was the first Black woman to receive the Henry Johnson Award from the Magazine Publishers of America. Taylor is an important figure to note because her perspective essentially marks the prevalence of certain topics in *Essence* Magazine during her period of leadership; many of her views are important to forming a “true” Black womanhood (Arango 1).

***VIBE* Magazine**

VIBE Magazine is geared towards Black men and women who embrace the urban music movement, which seeks to empower and redefine hip-hop. *VIBE* Magazine incorporates articles concentrated on celebrities, music, fashion, lifestyle, culture, and the urban music movement (About *VIBE* Lifestyle Network).

106th & Park Music Countdown

106th & Park is the Black Television Entertainment's (BET) most viewed and rated music series in history. 106th & Park is the number one music video countdown on television throughout all broadcasting networks. The countdown provides a live studio audience and has guest celebrities every week. Fans vote for their favorite music videos online that they support being on the countdown. Some other programs included in the live program is "Wild Out Wednesday" and "Freestyle Friday" which seeks to capture and recognize youth's talents all over the world. In fact, many competitors who have won these competitions have advanced, signing with major record labels. One of the champions was even cast in a blockbuster movie hit entitled "Fast & Furious II." 106th & Park was analyzed because of the program's reputation and popularity, and thus, has a significant impact on the dominant views of Black women and their functions, whether dealing with career development or family formations (106th & Park About).

Procedure

Content analysis on printed medium was only conducted on articles. It is important to note that although pictures correlating with articles embodied stereotypes of Black women, they were only utilized as contextual cues when critiquing the findings, and were not included in the analysis results. Articles ranged in format. Some were just essays, or interviews, while other articles were a mixture of both. However, the content analysis, despite its form, only focused on articles that exceeded a half of page in length. When conducting the content analysis, specific sections were not included. The mini articles in the *Revolution* section of *VIBE* Magazine were omitted. The Travel's guide in *Essence* magazine was also an exception to analysis. Additionally, the editor-in chief letters that in the all the magazines were not included in the findings. These omitted sections were perceived to have little impact on viewers' perception of womanhood, career development, or family formation. There were no articles included in these sections. Instead, there were a series of comments and interviews that focused mostly on previous publications.

The content analysis for magazines was segregated into of the following eight categories: financial independence, career development, family formation, romantic relationships, sexuality, womanhood, entertainment, and other. The coding of articles was not mutually exclusive because stereotypes depend on location and circumstances. Coding categories were developed through general themes that are confronting Black women routinely. The following categories are explained in detail:

- **Financial Independence:** money bravado, eliminating debt, advice on gaining wealth, biographies of wealthy women.

- **Career Development:** advice about the working environment, promotions, and furthering education. Job descriptions and biographies of education, career oriented women.
- **Family Formation:** demonstration of family structures. Advice on rearing and disciplining children.
- **Romantic Relationships:** advice and biographies of successful and dysfunctional relationships. Articles focus on different relationship statuses.
- **Sexuality:** sexual health and eroticism.
- **Womanhood:** perceived duties of an Black woman
- **Entertainment:** articles concentrating on movies, music, sports, cars, and technology.
- **Other:** Misc articles outside of entertainment.

In terms of the music videos, 106th & Park was viewed for three weeks during the summer, and subsequently, two weeks in the winter twice a week. As a result, a total of twenty-nine music videos were analyzed in terms of their perception of Black women in their idealized forms. Coding for music videos is more complex since data is analyzed in both their printed (lyrics) and electronic (visual) forms. The first part of content analysis for music videos focused on career development and was dismantled into the following seven coding categories: active/passive, private/public function(s), private/public setting(s), and objectification. The coding categories are explained in detail below:

- **Active:** are women engaged in purposeful activity? Black women participating in an event that requires physical effort and action
- **Passive:** inactive or idle
- **Private Function(s):** demonstration of women's activity in the home
- **Public Function(s):** demonstration of women's activity at the workplace, outside the home, or within a community
- **Private Setting(s):** location(s) of private functions
- **Public Setting(s):** location(s) of public functions
- **Objectification:** emphasis of lips, breasts, buttocks, hips, or legs

The second part of analysis focused on the relationships between Black men and women. Relationships were assessed to be confrontational, controlling, supportive, sexualized, subordinate, or nonexistent. The final part of content analysis of music videos dealt with assessing stereotypes. Table 1 provides the characteristics and definitions of each stereotype.

Table 1 Stereotypes

| Coding Category | Definitions |
|--------------------------|--|
| Mammy | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Submissiveness/Subordinate• Selfless• Nonthreatening• Problem Solver• Nurturing/Supportive |
| Sapphire | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Loud• Sassy• Emasculative• Need to control• Argumentative features |
| Jezebel | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hypersexualized• Seductive• Manipulative |
| Crazy Black Bitch | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Smart & Independent• Overly aggressive• Unprofessional• Argumentative• Loyalty non-existent• Lazy |
| Superwoman | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Intelligent• Professionalism• Independence• Strength• Assertiveness• Talent• Expected to do it all |

Music videos analyzed are listed in Table 2. For each music video, the title, artist(s), supporting artist(s), and directors were documented. This information could direct to patriarchy within the production of music videos that could have led to some disempowering forms of Black women. Documentation of the music video's demographic information also helped interpret the actual meanings behind lyrics. This is especially true for artists that would write music in response to an event, challenge, or "diss" by another artist.

Table 2 Sample Music Video Demographic Information

| Title | Artists/Featuring Artists | Director |
|------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| Always Strapped | Lil Wayne and Birdman feat. Mack Maine | X |
| Angels | P.Diddy, Dirty Money feat. BIG | Hype Williams |
| Birthday Sex | Jeremih | Paul Hunter |
| Booty Dew | GS Boyz | Kai Crawford and Yung Joc |
| Break Up | Mario, feat Sean "The Pen" & Gucci Man | Chris Robinson |
| Break Up To Make Up | Jeremih | Taj |
| Dancing on Me | Jim Jones, DJ Webster, feat Juelz Santana | Jim Jones, K. Cruster,, J. Franck |
| Death of the Auto-Tune | Jay-Z | Anthony Mandler |
| Doesn't Mean Anything | Alicia Keys | PR Brown |
| Drop It Low | Ester feat. Chris Brown | Joseph Kahn |
| Fire Burning | Sean Kingston | Gil Green |
| Five Star Remix | Yo Gotti, Gucci, Trina, Nikki Manji | RAGE |
| Hell of A Life | T.I. | Erik White |
| I Get It In | Omarion, feat Gucci Man | Not Available |
| I Look Good | Charlie Boy | Mr. Boomtown |
| Ice Cream Paint Job | Dorough | Dr. Teeth |
| I'm Good | Cclipse feat. Pharell | Dayo |

Table 2 Continued: Sample Music Video Demographic Information

| | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------|
| It Kills Me | Melanie Fiona | Armen Djerrahian |
| Knock You Down | Keri Hilson, feat Ne-Yo & Kanye West | Chris Robinson |
| Last Chance | Ginuwine | Juwane Lee |
| Money To Blow | Birdman feat. Lil Wayne and Drake | Gil Green |
| Must Be Love | Cassie feat. Diddy | Bernard Gourley |
| Not Anymore | LeToya Lockett | Bryan Barber |
| Thinkin' About You | Mario | Chris Robinson |
| Throw It In The Bag | Fabulous , feat The Dream | Erik White |
| Tie Me Down | New Boyz, feat. Ray J | Matt Alinzo/Skee TV |
| Walking On the Moon | The Dream feat Kanye West | Hype William |
| Why Are You | Amerie | Ray Kay |
| You're A Jerk | New Boyz | Matt Alonizo |

These coding categories aided in analyzing not only the stereotyping of Black women in music videos, but also their status and functions within the public and private spheres of society. What are Black women social roles? How are their private and public functions viewed in music videos? What are women's career status in the homes and public arenas? These were only some of the questions assessed in the results section as my research questions.

Chapter 5

RESULTS

In the results section, a quantitative and qualitative analysis was provided of the three sources. Specifically, the quantitative section focused on descriptive descriptions with the prevalence of stereotypes and the coding categories. Subsequently, the qualitative analysis provided detail through examples and specific articles.

***Essence* and *VIBE* Quantitative Analysis**

A total of 1343 articles were coded for *Essence* magazine. The largest category, approximately twenty-five percent, focused on the desired duties of a Black woman. Many articles that focused on Black womanhood discussed being healthy mentally and physically, engaging in community service, exercising one's political rights, there emphasis on individuality, and the demand to control or maintain the household. An additional 274 (twenty percent) articles focused on career development; which was the second largest coding category emphasized in *Essence* magazine. Many of the career development articles revolved around survival or success stories of the women in the workforce. Most importantly, *Essence* magazine focused on strategies Black women could utilize to actually become successful in the corporate world or working environment. Essentially, twenty percent of the articles concentrated on strategies to

obtain a higher education, advice on getting promotions, and job descriptions of successful Black women. Romantic relationships were the third largest category as it consisted of eighteen percent of *Essence* magazine articles. Some of these relationships were discussed because they were positive while others were criticized because of their many flaws. The relationship articles dealt with Black women finding ways to solve issues of cheating men. Additionally, they gave tips on living a healthy single or married lifestyle. Subsequently, the financial independence and family formation categories were approximately the same in percentage. Both categories equated to approximately ten percent of *Essence* magazine articles. Many of the articles included in the financial independence category gave advice on maintaining and gaining wealth. As well as finding means to eliminate revolving credit debt. More importantly, many of the articles emphasized a need for Black women to gain financial independence from their husband. The family formation category mainly focused on single motherhood and the means women could use to discipline and raise their children. The smallest categories were sexuality (which consisted of only 114 articles) and other (105 articles). The sexuality category focused on healthy sexuality and examples of dysfunctional sexuality; while the other category mentioned vacations, recipes, and decorating the household.

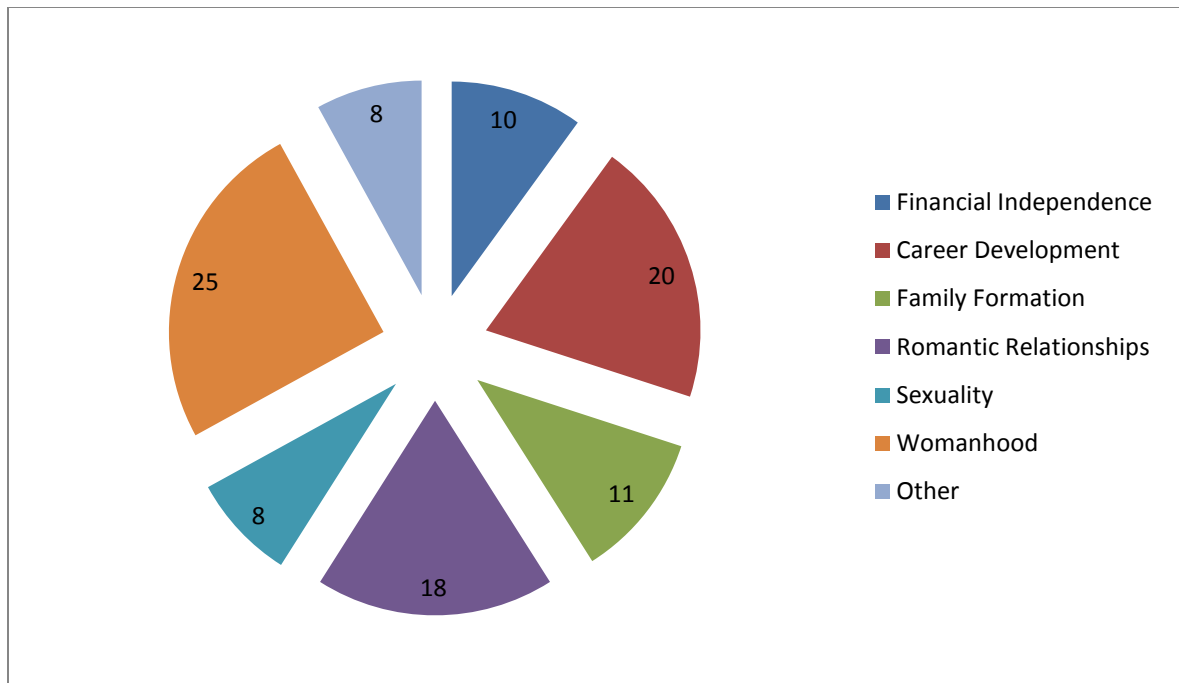


Figure 1. *Essence* Magazine Total Pie Chart

Subsequently, 1611 articles were analyzed for *VIBE* Magazine. The largest category analyzed was entertainment; which consisted of 702 articles (equating to forty-four percent of the articles published). Many of the articles coded as entertainment included biographies of successful actors, actresses, and singers. Additionally, they critiqued newly released technology, movies, or the activities of record labels. The career development category followed as it consisted of 548 (thirty-four percent) articles; which also focused on the success stories of actors, artists, executive producers, and record labels. The reminding coding categories served as supplementary publishing articles. Consequently, the articles included in the sexuality category consisted of two percent financial independence category three percent, family formation four percent,

womanhood category four percent, other category four percent, and romantic relationships another five percent.

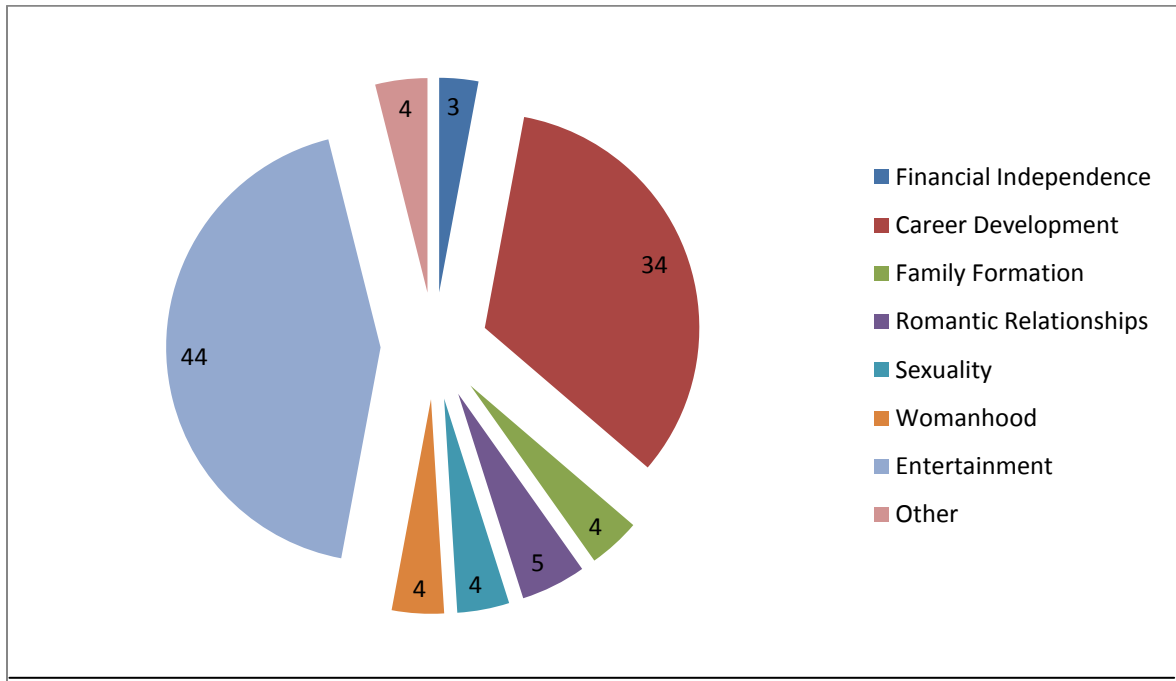


Figure 2. *VIBE* Magazine Total Pie Chart

***Essence* and *VIBE* Qualitative Analysis**

Financial Independence. Although the financial independence is one of the smaller categories in *Essence* magazine, there is a large amount of articles that are deemed important because they influence the Black woman who only relies on herself. Many of the articles focus on managing finance but they emphasize a diversified pole of methods. Women are advised to watch spending, save money, and focus on wealth accumulation. There is also a focus on Black women establishing their own business to

gain wealth. Women were advised to invest; especially in real estate. There is also a considerable amount of articles on bankruptcy laws, regulations, and how one would be able to be revitalized their finances after filing for bankruptcy. The actual recording and maintenance of finances are also important. Financial record keeping is nearly always suggested; especially because of the use of credit cards by American women. Some of articles in the financial independence category discussed some credit card and loan topics. Other articles discussed credit terms and some of the ways Black women can easily fall into debt. By being aware of the many advantages of having a credit card or cosigning loans, *Essence* magazine did include some articles relating to a child's college education and the starting of a business.

Articles in *VIBE* magazine, on the other hand, are focused on emphasizing the successes of celebrities' wealth instead of giving financial advice. Articles discussed the success of businesses and recording labels. However, *VIBE* extensively bragged about celebrities' luxurious lifestyle. For instance, many of the articles focused on the car collection of male artists or rappers. There is also extensive coverage on houses. For example, an article by Celia San Miguel (2006) entitled "Crib Notes" discussed Keysha Cole buying furniture to decorate her new real estate (72).

Career Development. In regards to *Essence* Magazine, the articles that fit the career development category concentrate on the working environment. There is discussion about Black women's relations with the boss, executives, and co-workers; especially those of a different race. An article entitled "What White Women are Saying About Us" explains how some white women only believe Black women were given a

promotion because of their race (Small 152-155). *Essence* published some articles on ways Black women can deal with such bias co-workers and how to manage their racial marginality in an effective manner to relieve racial tension in the workplace. “Cracking the Stained Glass Ceiling” by Suzan D. Johnson Cook is an example of such an approach. There was also advice on finding a mentor and scoring highly on job performance reviews. College is often emphasized and there is no age limit to receive a Bachelor’s degree. Additionally, there are a variety of careers described along with their expected salary range. Examples include nurses, radio personalities, priests, novelists, sports managers, or even video directors. *Essence* also provides a couple of articles that present guides or strategies to integrate work and motherhood. Specially, an articles written by Ella L.J. Edmondson Bell (2003) entitled “When You’re An Expectant Mom” gives some advice for coping with pregnancy in the workplace. Bell advised that women should not worry their boss about the adjustments that need to be made because of motherhood; instead assure their boss that they are dedicated to their careers (128).

The articles coded for career development in *VIBE* Magazine are concerned about biographies and revelations of successful people. Many of the articles reported on some downfall, which ultimately had a Cinderella ending. Additionally, articles relating to career development focus on the music industry and artist development. For instance, articles focused on releasing music, producing rhythms that make money, or the establishing of a music label. Job descriptions are also provided in *VIBE* Magazines, and once again, these careers mostly are centered on the music/entertainment industry. Examples of job descriptions include the following: accountants, music teachers,

basketball stars, video dancers, costume designers, stylist, choreographer, producers, photographer, comedian, and executive assistants.

Family Formation. The subject of family formation is very straight-forward. There are different discussions depending on the magazine. *Essence* magazine's main concerns are centered on developing effective strategies for parents to raise and discipline Black children. "To Spank or Not to Spank?" discussed how spanking, pinching, or slapping are related to behavioral and mental health problems in children. Subsequently, information about the developmental stages of child development is given and the effective discipline strategies are compared to each stage (N.S. 19). Other articles also discussed ways to raise a confident child, adoption, safety, breast-feeding, engaging children in their academic studies, and how to integrate children into daily activities. The following persons are some celebrities who are used as exemplars for such parenting habits: Jill Scott, Whitney Houston, Nia Long, Will and Jada Smith. There was also some discussion on family structures and what Black women can do to solve the single-parent household problem in the Black community. "Where's Daddy" by Victoria K. Bell (2003) focuses on what Black single mothers can do when their children's father is not present. Essentially, how can single mothers deal with a "delinquent" dad (164-168)? On the contrary, "Do Right Men" by Cynthia Gordy and Nazenut Hablezghi (2006) gives an example of a good man; such as Jamie Foxx who is always there for his daughter. Foxx supports her financially and emotionally in her endeavors (141-165). Other articles on family structure dealt with parents of different sexual orientations and the experiences of soldiers' wives.

VIBE, however, focuses on family structure. Celebrities were brought to the forefront; exposing their family histories and lifestyles. Consequently, there is a variety of household structures. However, for the most part, many celebrities were raised in single-parent households. Only a few lived in blended or nuclear families. Such findings are demonstrated in articles describing “baby mama” dramas with Lil Wayne and Busta Rhymes. Subsequently, Idris Elba is also celebrated because of his experiences as a single parent; but mainly as a single parent father.

Romantic Relationships. Both *Essence* and *VIBE* magazines discuss issues and give testimonies about dating, successful marriages, divorces, and breakups. However, *Essence* magazine emphasizes detailed testimonies and advice on romantic relationships. *Essence* magazine harbors a variety of articles dealing with different formations of relationships. Many focused on the single life: “No Man Can Make You Happy” by T.D. Jakes (2003) and “How I Became My Own Lover” by Shay Youngblood (2005) demonstrated ways women can survive alone. Spirituality and self-perception were used as resources for such a single life. However, the single life was not idealized, instead, it used as an alternative to find happiness. Real happiness is embedded in marriages, maintaining relationships, and discovering solutions to a problem. “Why Good Men Cheat” by Nick Charles (2003) and “Real Love” by Kimberly L. Allers (2005) demonstrates problematic relationships that were longstanding. Essentially, real love is working through problems. Other topics revolve around romantic relationships explained in *Essence* included domestic violence, mother-in-law issues, marriage counseling, lesbian marriages, interracial marriages, and army marriages. It should also

be noted that the two most celebrated couples in both *Essence* and *VIBE* magazine are Will and Jada Pinkett Smith, known for their long marriage, and Michelle and Barack Obama.

Sexuality. *Essence* magazine takes an educational stance when it comes to sexuality. The articles focus on improving sex lives, information on sexual health (such as STDs), attacking the stigmas of STDs, protection, intimacy, sexual abuse, organisms, hysterectomy, pregnancy, and sexual orientations. *Essence*, however, provides different perspectives on sexuality. There are many articles emphasizing sexual health; but there are others that encourage abstinence. “Not Until My Wedding” written by Vanessa Bush (2003), a former beauty queen, advocates for sexual abstinence (187-88). “Like A Virgin” by Akiba Solomon (2006) discuss men who practice abstinence (150). Whether a woman is sexually active or abstaining from sexual contact, *Essence* advocates for mentors. “My Sister’s Keeper” describes how mentoring and guiding other young Black women in their sexuality is awarding. It has become common knowledge that HIV/AIDS is the most common in Black women. In a way, Black women mentoring are saving a life (Saunders 40).

On the other hand, *VIBE* only provides a couple of articles on sex education; such as STDs (specifically HIV/AIDS), sexual orientations, and Viagra. However, many of *VIBE*’s articles deal with artists claiming having ‘friends with benefits’. Additionally, there were exclusive articles where Black women, such as Brandy and Keyshia Cole, would explicitly deny their innocence and embrace their sexuality.

Black Womanhood. The main features of womanhood in the printed media investigated are appearance, the community, family, and relationships. Throughout *Essence* and *VIBE* magazines, women volunteering and engaging in community services is very important. Part of this community service includes being role models and mentoring younger Black women. There is also a focus on appearance where health, fitness, skin beauty, and hair maintenance is repeatedly mentioned. “Age Is Nothing But A Number” by Lettice Graham (2003) discuss women taking care of body and spirituality despite their age (92-97). The Black woman’s entire being is revolved around relations. Whether these relations are in the workplace, with children, husband, or community members, women are encouraged to be always involved in dwellings. Consequently, Oprah Winfrey is the most celebrated women both *Essence* and *VIBE* magazine.

Entertainment. Coding for the entertainment category was completed for *VIBE* magazine because its main focus is entertainment. Entertainment, according to *VIBE*, revolves around partying, lyrical beats, video games, fashion, celebrities, performances, cribs, contests, poets, books, activists, law enforcements, cars, technology, sports, reality television, hair-cuts, vacations, prison, liquor, and cigars.

Other. *Essence* magazine has articles focusing on the following topics: recipes, social gatherings, sororities, news (Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans), beauty products, hair styles, wine tasting, history, the Black Power Movement, sex trafficking, religion, and rape in Congo. *VIBE* magazine discussed the following topics: street racing, technology, fashion, African rebellions, cribs, Artist Rights Movement, activism, recipes, war, vacations, racial issues, Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, history, and geography.

These topic are included in the other category because they do not meet any requirement regarding womanhood, career, finances, or stereotypes.

Music Video Quantitative Analysis

Twenty nine music videos were coded for this study. Eighty- six percent of music videos included some form of objectification; eighty-six percent of videos emphasized women's breasts, buttocks, hips, or legs in some form or fashion. Coincidentally, seventy-four percent of music videos coded include a Jezebel sexualized stereotype. Twenty three percent of the music videos also consist of the Sapphire stereotype. The Mammy stereotype followed afterwards with a mere three percent. The Crazy Black Bitch and Superwoman stereotype is non-existent. The relationships of Black women in relation to men are associated with the prevalence of historical stereotypes. Consequently, the high frequency of the Jezebel stereotype can result in the high prevalence of sexualized relationships between Black men and women in music videos. As a result, in regards to the relationships demonstrated between Black men and women in music videos, nearly half (forty-nine percent) of the relationships are sexualized. Additionally, twenty-three of the music videos demonstrated relationships are confrontational, eight percent that are submissive, five percent labeled caring/supportive, and there are no relationships deemed controlling.

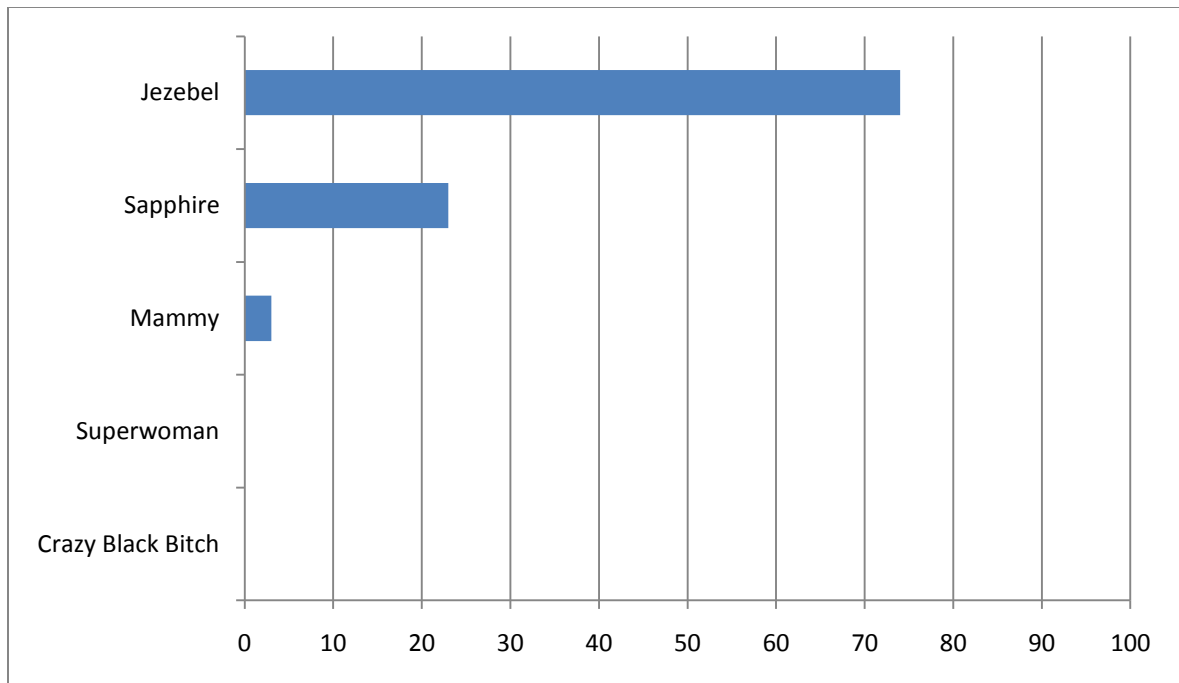


Figure 3. Frequencies of Historical Stereotypes

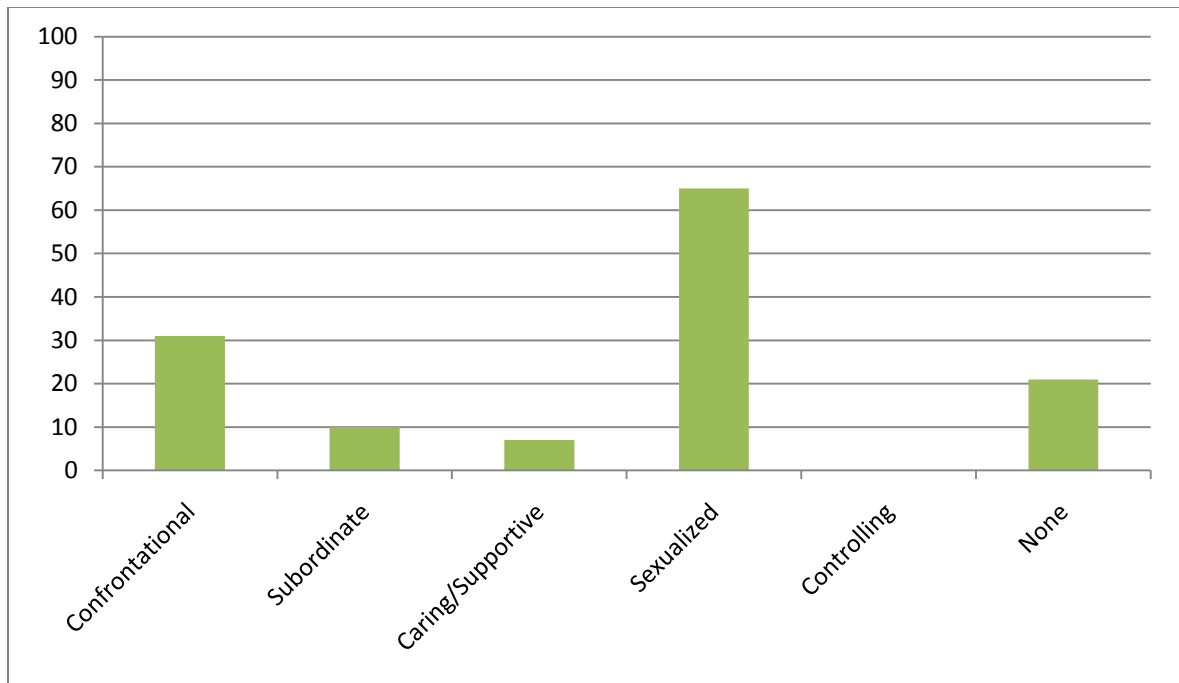


Figure 4. Women's Relationship with Black Men

Such percentages speak to the content of the music videos. Many of the videos were sexual, as a result, the Black women in music videos are placed in certain settings and their functions are very limited. It is important to note that none of these findings are mutually exclusive. Consequently, fifty-two percent of the music videos include Black women who are active; while sixty-six percent include passive women. In terms of functionality, ninety percent of music videos include women performing a public function; while forty-one percent include some with private functions. Subsequently, seventy-nine percent of Black women are functioning in the public setting; whereas only forty-one percent function in the private sphere.

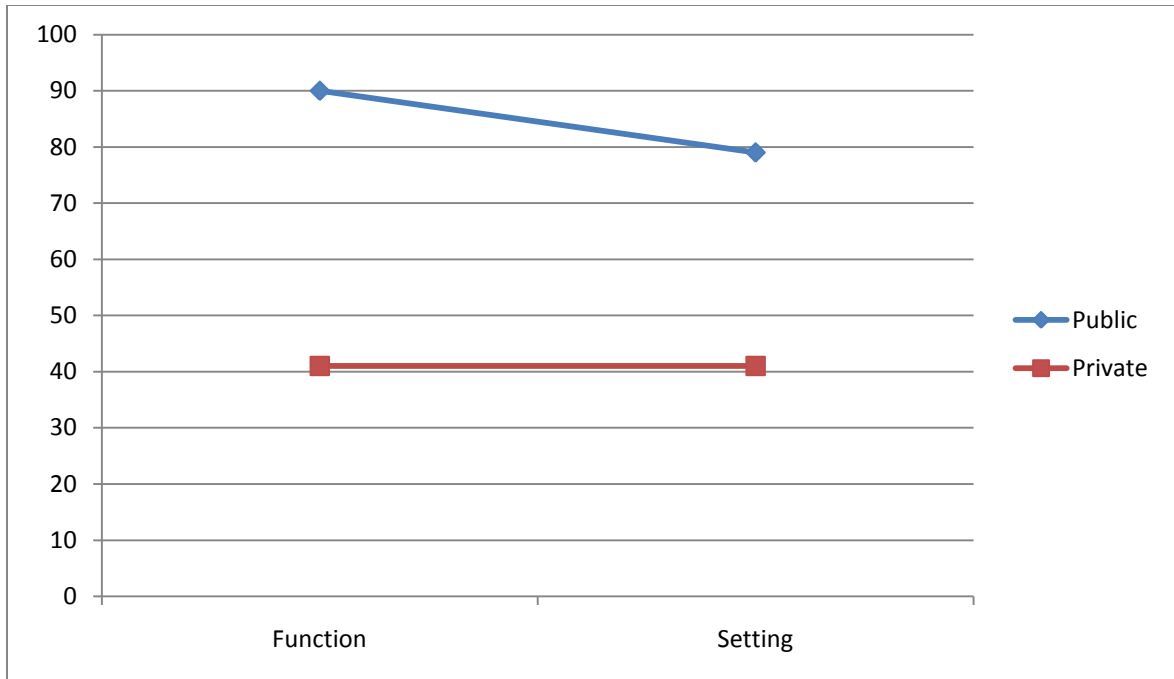


Figure 5. Music Video Public/Private Settings and Functions

Music Video Qualitative Analysis

In the music videos women are passive rather than active. However, there are some important features of the public and private sphere in the music videos that needs to be emphasized. The private sphere usually involves women's prevalence in the home. Music videos only included certain parts of the household; specifically the bedroom and kitchen. In regards to the private functions, many Black women are mainly used as sexual pleasures for their intimate partners and the comfort of their children. There are also Black women who were just idle or modeling in the household. In other words, many Black women would stand around with little motivation to be active. There was, however, in *Doesn't Mean Anything* by Alicia Keys, a mulatta female artist playing

the piano in the living room. This is an exceptional case where a Black woman is shown as active; but is still situated in the private sphere.

On the other hand, there are diverse images of Black women in public settings with functions. Black women are seen completing various tasks. Black women are placed in the clubs, parks, parking lots, prisons, restaurants, stores, performing stages, streets, outside buildings, mountains, and even a space ship. The functions women performed in these settings usually revolved around modeling. Many Black women would stand around to accessorize the possessions of artists/rappers in the music videos. In other words, many Black women would make ordinary objects look more appealing. Through the objectification of Black women, objects gained profit and marketability. Partying, socializing, shopping, and modeling were their main functions in the public sphere. In terms of career development, many Black women are seen as escorts, strippers, background dancers, drivers, fans, cleaners, cheerleaders, and waitresses. There are also some outliers where Black women play pedestrians, prisoners, band players, and rappers.

Taking into consideration the private and public functions of Black women in music videos, would explain the high percentage of objectification. Women are objectified; their buttocks, breasts, legs, hips, and stomach are emphasized. *I Get It In* by Omarion went as far as using Black women as lifting weights in his music video.

The private and public functions in music videos also influence women's relationship to Black men. Such relationships, in turn, embody the historical stereotypes discussed in prior to findings. Most of the relationships with men are sexualized. This is

because many of the music videos objectified women and used them as accessories to their possessions (i.e. car collections). This would cause for the Jezebel stereotype to be the most prominent. The second largest form of relationship is confrontational. There was usually confrontation between Black women and men because of relationship conflicts. In all the videos demonstrating a confrontational relationship, a Black woman is accusing a man of cheating and their responses to cheating were usually emasculation, leading to the Sapphire stereotype. Some women are also subordinate, caring, and supportive in their relationships with men. However, this is usually in the case where the female is highly dependent upon the male. The Mammy stereotype is usually the Black woman who only means of resources is the Black male. There are no controlling relationships displayed, additionally, six music videos demonstrated no form of relationships. Subsequently, with the stereotypes, the Crazy Black Bitch and Superwoman are not displayed.

In the discussion section, these dynamics of Black entertainment will be furthered examined. Specifically, there are differences in the printed and electronic forms of media that needs to be recognized. Additionally, throughout the different sources of Black entertainment there are stereotypes that are dominant and are idealized.

Limitations

There are a few limitations to this study that need to be recognized. Since convenient sampling was utilized, the sources obtained were mainly known to the researcher and adviser. There are a vast amount of other sources that could be analyzed

that fit under the Black entertainment umbrella. Another limitation is that there was only one coder for the content analysis. This is the same coder that reported and analyzed results. Another study should be conducted that utilize the strategies of team research to decrease the probability of a researcher's bias.

Chapter 6

DISCUSSION

Introduction

Stereotypes are still prevalent in society; but especially within media. It is important to recognize the prevalence of stereotypes because media is very influential in determining the perceptions and views of members within society. Subsequently, these stereotypes impact the interactions between different societal groups. There are stereotypes for every segment of society; however, there was a focus on Black female stereotypes because of their historical continuity. Historical stereotypes are likely to have a profound effect on the present day because they have been in existence for so long. After analyzing different forms of media, printed and electronic, my findings indicate the prevalence of historical stereotypes in contemporary America. My first finding focuses on the difference in the prevalence of historical stereotypes in printed and electronic media.

Contrasting Stereotypes in Printed and Electronic Forms

There is a contrast between printed and electronic medium and their perception of Black women. Essentially, the influence of media is dependent on its actual form. In

regards to the printed medium, the Superwoman and Jezebel stereotypes are common. The perception of Black women encourages this “do it all” mentality. This is because Black women are encouraged to attain success despite their past experiences of oppression that could place them at a disadvantage. Additionally, women are often sexualized within the textual and visual forms of printed media. The differences of the Superwoman and Jezebel stereotype being prevalent in different forms of printed media are dependent on the targeted audience of the medium. These conditions will be further analyzed in detail as the paper progresses. Subsequently, the Jezebel and Sapphire stereotypes are more common in the electronic form. This prevalence is largely due to the content of music videos, which frequently discuss issues with relationships, sex, and money.

It is important to recognize that printed media has always been depended on for cultural imagery. Printed images have been consistent throughout history. Therefore, stereotypes in *Essence* and *VIBE* magazines have only altered their images of Black women. As a result, these historical stereotypes are still recognizable in current media, just in a slightly different form. Basically, *Essence* and *VIBE* magazine have images of Black women that are persistent throughout time; therefore, their consequences are expected to be also persistent throughout time.

The findings of stereotypes in electronic media are important because it is preferred by the younger generational audiences. Consequently, the perceptions of electronic stereotypes are mostly impacting the youth. Music videos are the most influential form of electronic media because of revenue and profit. In other words, sex

sells. Therefore, in a capitalist society, the profiting from music videos is essential to the objectified images portrayed. However, the images of Black women mainly as Jezebels and Sapphires are detrimental to the perception and views of mostly children, adolescents, and young adults. Even though the printed and electronic forms of media are both important in analyzing the perception of Black women in media, the electronic form should be given more attention because of the age in which societal members currently reside. Currently, we live in a society that is constantly advancing in electronic and technology. Most importantly, in this age of technological advancement, the emphasis of such advancement is essential. It is important to keep this question in mind; would a young adult choose reading a newspaper over watching the news in their leisure time? It is significant to recognize that while analyzing these historical stereotypical images, people are living in a society where electronics are integrated in every aspect of life; which could make visualizing media preferable to reading text.

The Demographic Differences of Media Sources: Race, Gender, and Class

While assessing the differences between printed and electronic sources of media; it is also essential to recognize the distinctions between the sources studied. These differences need to be emphasized; especially when discussing the characteristics of the targeted audiences. *Essence* magazine, *VIBE* magazine, and the music videos all have different targeted audiences through the substance of their content. These differences center on the concepts of race, gender, and class.

The Distinction of Race

All of the media sources are centered on the Black race; however, diversity varies depending on the source. *Essence* utilizes race as a central theme throughout the magazine. *Essence* only targets Blacks. Interestingly, the experiences of other marginalized groups are not included. For instance, the perspectives of people from a Hispanic heritage who experience some of the same struggles of Blacks are not included. Instead, in *Essence* only the Black experience is centered on; as a result, *Essence* tries to portray the Black experience as one of uniqueness and distinction. There might be similarities between different marginalized groups' experiences, but they must be treated and resolved separately. Because many of the concepts, issues, and solutions are embedded within the Black race and Black community, it was essential for *Essence* to focus on the experiences of Blacks.

On the other hand, *VIBE* magazine provides more diversity because of the ranges of their targeted audiences. Although the majority of *VIBE* magazine's articles focused on the entertainment experiences of Blacks, there was diversity in the understanding of ethnic groups. As a result, the experiences of Blacks, Hispanics, and Asians were portrayed. Entertainment is one of the few arenas in popular culture that bring people from all different background together. Therefore, the experiences of the dominant of population were also examined in *VIBE* magazine. Although many of the Caucasians in *VIBE* magazine experienced tokenism, as their presence were rarely demonstrated, in the Hip Hop entertainment industry, there is an understanding and appreciation for their participation. Frequently articles relaying the experiences of Caucasians in the music

industry discuss their determination to reach the top to obtain executive and director positions in the entertainment industry. There are also experiences of Caucasian artists who are exceptional in terms of their artistry. Eminem is an example of a White male artist who eliminated any tension between racial boundaries. Eminem appeals to and is respected by Black audiences. His talent in artistry supersedes his race, and his success and status in the music industry is dependent only upon such a talent. Unfortunately, Eminem is one of the few Caucasian male all throughout *VIBE* magazine that is praised and given bountiful respect. Essentially, *VIBE* appeals to the masses of marginalized groups within society, however, even though some experiences of Caucasians in the Hip Hop Entertainment industry is recognized, it is still close to invisibility.

The music videos are distinctive because they cross racial segregation. Music videos appeal to children, adolescents, and young adults of different races and ethnic backgrounds. Even though the sample of music videos for this study was drawn from Black Entertainment Television (BET), they are still displayed on other channels in the television network. Music, overall, is listened to throughout various locations that have people from distinguishable backgrounds. Consequently, there can be a music video that have detrimental effects in one market and provides benefits or profits in another market. Even though music videos on BET are ghettoized with the experiences of Blacks, those same experiences are relied to audiences that vary in their backgrounds and perceptions.

The Distinction of Gender

In regards to gender, there is a complementary relationship between male and female power structures. There is a great distinction between the realm of *Essence* magazine and the sphere consisting of *VIBE* magazine and music videos.

Essence magazine is specifically a magazine that caters to Black women. Most importantly, *Essence* focuses on the empowerment and recognition of Black women; their experiences, struggles, and success. However, through such empowerment, the experiences of men are often marginalized. . Consequently, women are seen as powerful and superior. The ideal Black in *Essence* magazine is capable of doing anything. She is invincible and her weaknesses are never conveyed. Instead, there are only suggestions within *Essence* magazine to make this ideal Black woman stronger, wiser, smarter, and importantly skillful at her talents. On the other hand, how are the men in *Essence* portrayed? The experiences of men are frequently supplemental to the Black woman. His experiences are utilized *for* the development and understanding of romantic relationships and family formation. Essentially, his experience is supplemental and is only used as a source for improvement of the ideal Black woman in *Essence* magazine; specifically when dealing with careers and the family. Consequently, this male experience is inferior. Make no mistake, the male experience is supportive to the development of the ideal Black women, however, it is not necessary. Interestingly, the male figure becomes the minority, and while he is marginalized his opinions counts, it only counts to a certain extent; especially when giving empowering advice to Black women in certain aspects of daily living.

Such a phenomenon becomes important to study because there is a fundamental contradiction within *Essence* when it comes to gender. On one side of *Essence*, the Black male is needed for family formation. There is a sense of the idealized nuclear family that will be discussed in detail as the paper progresses. This idealized nuclear family requires the Black male as an active figure. Additionally, the single Black mother is seen as an issue within the Black community. On the contrary, on the other side of *Essence*, there is this Superwoman who is expected to do any task, anywhere, at any time of the day. Fundamentally, this Superwoman does not need anyone else. She is an independent figure that can achieve success in the home and workplace single-handedly. Overall, there is no sense of equality between men and women in the *Essence* magazine. The Black woman is superior above all others. This historical phenomenon becomes apparent throughout time and so do the stereotypes that embody it.

The gender power dynamics in music videos and *VIBE* magazine are a different story. Similar to most aspects of society, the male is dominant. *VIBE* magazine and music videos have a patriarchic point of view. Therefore, the male is in control of everything. His opinion is the only one that counts. His perspective on history is the only one studied. Essentially, the male experiences are superior to everyone else. *VIBE* magazine and the music videos portray experiences that are central male and supplemental female. There is a male gaze where the female is degraded through the male figure's point of view. Subsequently, Black women in these media sources are frequently objectified. Women are used as sexualized tools for men's enjoyment. They have limited power founded upon the Black woman's sexuality. Women use their body

parts sexually to control men, fulfill their needs, and desires. A woman's sexuality is the only realm where she has partial control and can develop capabilities to determine her future and destiny.

The Distinction of Class

There is also an interesting relationship between social classes. In *Essence* magazine there is an obvious target towards middle class women. This is because the main subjects discussed in *Essence* center on career development, professionalism, and financial independence. Such concepts require resources from all different realms of society in which only a limited amount of people are allowed to acquire. For instance, in *Essence* magazine the gain of financial independence is frequently associated with educational advancement. However, a college education is extremely costly and expenses are gradually increasing gradually. Financial aid is available, but has very restrictive requirements and often times require extreme poverty for a student to be financially supported. Additionally, eligibility for loans requires a good credit score. Ignoring the possibility of scholarships, how else are Black women from lower and working classes will fund for a college education? Another example is investment. Many of *Essence* articles discussed ways to invest in property and the market. Articles give advice on managing and gaining money. There is this reoccurrence where investment as financial independence is targeted to a specific population, one with resources. Consequently, the vast amount of people who attend college and invest money must have the means to do so. Essentially, there is a familial and community support

system that is implemented to aide middle class Black women in their struggles of achieving success. Black middle class women are constantly encouraged to consider the advancement of their education, pursue job in top executive positions, and as a final resort start their own businesses.

On the other hand, *VIBE* magazine targets the working class segment of the population. *VIBE*'s main focus is seeking career development and capitol through the entertainment industry. Examples include becoming a famous artist, dancer, athletes, model, and to attain some professional executive positions in the music industry; such as accountant, lawyer, and producer positions. Educational advancement is not the main goal for *VIBE* magazine. Instead, the emphasis is on making money, attaining luxurious possessions (cars, clothes, sneakers, and jewelry), and becoming famous. There are no suggestions on maintaining wealth, saving, investing, or even thinking about the future financially; this where the fundamental distinction between *Essence* and *VIBE* magazines are recognized.

The difference between *Essence* and *VIBE* magazines when it comes to finances is their view on money. *Essence* views capitol as wealth, on the contrary, *VIBE* views it as an income. *Essence* magazine focus is in on gaining and maintaining wealth. There is an intergenerational argument that is present throughout the magazine. Wealth must be attained and maintained for the present and younger generations. For instance, paying for a college education is important in terms of rearing successful and independent children. On the other hand, *VIBE* magazine views money as a source of income. Some articles discuss artists who make a major hit and make fast money. However, what happens to

these artists after making major hits? As a result of fast-money making artists' ignorance in regards to recording and maintaining their wealth, many of them lose their money. They experience the life of luxury and wealth for only a quick second, and then are back to their status as the working class for a lifetime; unless, of course, there is another major hit. This 'get rich quick' mentality does not focus on academia because wealth attained from educational advancement is a gradual process. Instead, a career (athlete, artist, and dancer) that is constantly endangered by conditions (e.g. illness, broken bones, or even a sore throat) is depended on for a life source of wealth. Essentially, there is a fundamental difference between *Essence* and *VIBE* magazine on their perception of wealth and maintaining capitol worth throughout generations. *Essence* is constantly focusing on the financial stability of the future; while *VIBE* focuses on attaining money for the present.

Music videos provide a mixture of social classes. The content of music videos often demonstrates a lifestyle that is upper class status. The artists in music videos are rarely seen working. Additionally, if artists are working they are typically engaged in professional jobs with high making salaries. Typically, artists are seen enjoying life with limited responsibilities and obligations. Subsequently, such an idealized lifestyle is shared across all social classes. The poor, working, middle, and upper class all want to live the same lifestyle of artists; one that is filled with bountiful resources and purchasing power. Essentially, there is a mixture of classes idealizing the life of musicians and artists in music videos. The electronic form of media, such as music videos, is one of the few things that can bring social classes together that share a common interest.

The Stereotypical Similarities between Media Sources

There are, however, some similarities that need to be emphasized. Even though the media sources analyzed for this study have different targeted audience, they all embed historical Black stereotypes. These historical stereotypes have an impact on Black womanhood, career development, and family formation that need full recognition. Specifically, *Essence* embodies the dominant Superwoman stereotype, *VIBE* the hypersexualized Jezebel stereotype, and music videos materialize a mixture of historical stereotypes.

***Essence* Magazine, the Dominant Superwoman Stereotype, and Secondary Mammy**

Essence magazine is a form a media whose objective is to empower Black women. Their main objective is to reject the myths that surround the degrading images of Black womanhood by providing alternate forms of media for Black women to obtain information. However, while *Essence* is trying to dispel the degrading stereotypes (e.g. Jezebel & Sapphire), there is a constant struggle to elevate the powerful and controlling stereotypes. Specifically, *Essence* embodies the Superwoman stereotypes where the Black woman is expected to “do it all”. The effort to provide various images of Black womanhood also conforms to the stereotypical image of the Superwoman.



Figure 6. Sample *Essence* Magazine Covers

The Superwoman stereotype has no fears, insecurities, or weaknesses. It is a new image that emerged for the middle-class professional Black women (Reynolds-Dobbs et al. 138). Therefore, *Essence* magazine targeting middle-class, professional Black can be an explanation for the high prevalence of the Superwoman stereotype. The Superwoman acquires qualities that exemplify intelligence, strength, assertiveness, and talent. She is capable of completing any assignment despite its difficulties (Thomas et al. 430). The Superwoman is prevalent in *Essence* because the various images of Black women with different tasks and responsibilities are seen, altogether, as an obligation for the idealized Black woman.

There are many famous Superwoman stereotypes in contemporary media. However, the most famous is Oprah Winfrey. She is one of the most idealized Black women in media. Her images are also frequent in *Essence* magazine. This is because Winfrey's opinions actually count, and thus, she is a model for minorities and women.

There are very few names that can compete with the national recognition of Oprah Winfrey's name in late-twentieth century popular culture. *Time* magazine diagnosed a "full Oprahization" of American politics; *Publishers Weekly* affirm an "Oprah Effect" over book sales; and the "Oprah Factor" in the communication industry (Smith-Shomade 148).



Figure 7. Oprahization

Oprah's recognition and effect on the communication industry and popular culture is discussed throughout *Essence* magazine. She is an example of a Black woman whose capabilities vary, range, and most importantly are influential to the general public. Oprah exerts intelligence and reliability. She is written about throughout many magazine articles, broadcasted in television shows, awards shows, featured and directed movies.

Her success is a 'rag to riches' story for other Black women to relate. If Oprah can make it, why can't other Black women do the same? It is evident that Winfrey is in control of her success and future. Essentially, Winfrey is a model for Black women promoting individualism; where the possibility of success is within the individual. The individual controls the conditions of their future. This Superwoman stereotype is one way to have control over the future. A Black woman must do everything by herself. It is acceptable for others to depend on the Superwoman; but dependency on others is not appropriate. Instead, Black women must exert full independency in order for her success to be plausible and recognized. Essentially, this is Black womanhood. Black women must complete their tasks and responsibilities; even though these obligations exceed the capable human limit. As a result of the Black woman is the Superwoman, she must be supportive and nurturing of relationships, children, career, community, and religion simultaneously. Even though this is encouraged with a nuclear family formation, a single parented household must also fulfill the same obligations. There are no exceptions. Black womanhood is accepting these numerous responsibilities and being able to complete these tasks sufficiently. Any lack of motivations to fulfill these obligations will result in a label of weakness and incapability. Maybe this is the reason why the lower and working classes are not included in *Essence* magazine idealization of a Black woman? They are weak and incapable of dealing with and elevating above their struggles and conditions to better themselves? However, many of the Black women in the lower classes lack resources to fulfill obligations to the family, career, religion, and community simultaneously.

Consequently, this Superwoman stereotype has serious influences on career development and family formation for Black women. In *Essence* magazine, there is this invisible tension between family formation and career development. In terms of family formation, the nuclear family is most preferred.



Figure 8. *Essence* Magazine Family Formations

There are also examples of single headed households by women, but there were always some form of male figure involved (e.g. family, friends, pastors) to substitute for the missing father figure. Still, there is no doubt that the Black woman is in control. In regards to career development, the Black women are always encouraged to advance. If they are not trying to advance in academia, than they should start their own businesses. Such advancement is another strategy to gain independency and have

authority over one's positioning in life. Subsequently, there are articles that emphasize on the integration family formation and career development; however, there is little recognition of the difficulties and sacrifices of being a career-oriented mother or wife. *Essence* refutes the fact that, many times, the source of a problematic relationship or marriage is a career-oriented woman. Relational problems often times surface when a Black or any woman in general, refutes conformity to the societal expectations of their sex. The nuclear family becomes problematic when a woman has a limited role in the household because of her duties in the workplace. Consequently, the duties of maintaining a household are not fulfilled. The men's positioning in this society is in the public realm; so who is responsible for the private responsibilities when the woman is also embedded in the workforce? These are fundamental questions that *Essence* does not answer in their advisement to Black women about career and family.

As a result of the extreme focus on careers, there is a lack of autonomy for Black women to choose between the public and private realms and do not integrate the both together. Consequently, the stay-at-home-housewife is not fully recognized. Essentially, Black housewives are nonexistent. There is no recognition of their experiences and concerns. Due to the lack of distinction between the responsibilities and obligations of career women and housewives, one image of Black woman becomes idealized, and the other marginalized. *Essence* attempts to empower Black woman, but during such a process, the experiences of other groups within the Black female populations becomes unreal.

Some forms of the Mammy stereotype are also demonstrated throughout *Essence*, but in a subdued form. The Mammy stereotype is frequently demonstrated in the mother/daughter relationships throughout *Essence* magazine. Essentially, the older Black woman must sacrifice so that her offspring could be successful and have potential. . Not all the characteristics of the Mammy stereotype are demonstrated throughout *Essence*; however, there are a couple attributes; such as being nurturing and supportive. These characteristics establish a sense of sisterhood and mentorship throughout *Essence* that connects the outlooks of the past, present, and future generations simultaneously.



Figure 9. *Essence* Magazine Sisterhood & Mentoring Relationships

Consequently, the emotional attributes of the Mammy has transformed over time. There is still this self-sacrificing Black woman, but the motivations for such selflessness are different. Instead, there is an image of Black women being sacrificial due to the

needs of their children. Such sacrifice is acceptable because it reaffirms a woman's natural duty to her children. As a result of such sacrifices, there is a demonstration of beautiful and successful women in the career movement; such as Michelle Obama and Tracee Ross. Thus, there are vastly different requirements for the idealized image for young and older Black women. One image portrays a career oriented woman who must integrate all aspects of womanhood; while the other embodies one with a sacrificial mentality for the sake of the family or daughters.

***VIBE* and Their Hypersexuality towards Black Women**

VIBE magazine mainly focuses on the entertainment industry. Consequently, the objectification of women in general is heavily prevalent. Such objectifications establish the Jezebel stereotype; which is a Black female who is excessively sexualized. The Jezebel stereotype is a Black female who is portrayed as mulatta or fair-complexioned. She resembles characteristics that embody the dominant European standards of beauty. The Jezebel stereotype is seductive, manipulative, and unable to control her sexuality (Jewell 46). Subsequently, how does such hypersexuality of Black women link with Black womanhood, career development, and family formation?

Black womanhood, according to the perceptions provided by *VIBE*, is centered on sexuality. Thus, this hypersexualized Black woman is not taken seriously unless she is dealing with her sexuality. The Jezebel's sexuality is the essence of her being. Essentially, her sexuality is the only thing that matters and exists in the public and private realms. There is, however, only a specific type of sexuality that is fully recognized.

VIBE does not consider the homosexual and bisexual relationships between men and women. Instead, the only function for Black women's hypersexuality demonstrated in *VIBE* magazine is to fulfill the pleasures of heterosexual men. Essentially, this hypersexualized Jezebel's only worth is objectification for men's pleasurable needs.



Figure 10. Sample *VIBE* Magazine Covers

This objectification between men and Black women legitimize the contemporary patriarchic society where only the heterosexual experience is recognized. Additionally, women are only used as tools to uplift the male's experience. The Jezebel stereotypes only limit the role of Black women. There are restrictive images of Black women being active; even with their sexuality. Black women are passive beings, waiting to be used by a male figure. What does this say about Black womanhood? Is it because

Black female Jezebels are unable to control their sexual desires that they should be treated inhumanely? Since Jezebels are inhumane, why should they have any worth? Why should they be respected? Why should these Jezebels in any academic or working environment in terms of their goals and authority? These questions demonstrate the serious consequences that evolve from overt sexualization of Black women.

Thus, the objectification of Black women influences career development and family formations. There is a modest concentration on career objectives with the Jezebel stereotype. The main careers emphasized in *VIBE* magazine are those that expose a woman's sexuality. Some examples of these careers include models, dancers, or even artists. Subsequently, it is very rare for Black women to be seen as an accountant or entertainment lawyer. There are no clear goals on advancing education for Black women. Instead, executive positions and job descriptions are usually geared towards Black men. Subsequently, there is a modest focus on family relations in nuclear and singled headed household formations. Many articles in *VIBE* discussed celebrities' relationships, marriages, breakups, and divorces. However, there was hardly ever emphasis on the rearing of children. The main focus was on the featured celebrity's upbringing and the type of household they resided in. Many of these celebrities resided in singled headed female households. The Black woman's sexuality can be indirectly blamed for such an incidence. A hypersexualized Black woman with little control over her sexuality has children out of wedlock, and so what makes her control over reproduction any better? The Jezebels in *VIBE* spend too much time on manipulating others with her sexuality. Therefore, she gets into unhealthy relationships that do not

last. Essentially, her overt sexuality is to blame for not maintaining a nuclear household. No matter what form of media is demonstrated, the nuclear household is seen as the best and healthiest option for children and the family.

Music Videos as a Mixture of Historical Stereotypes

Music videos are an important strategy for the marketing of artists. Music videos are important to the development of the artists because of their sales. Consequently, there is a constant effort on the part of producers, directors, and artists to conform to the standards of a patriarchic society where “sex sells” (Smith-Shomade 70). The main objective of music videos is to create content that appeals to male gazes, stereotypical institutions and norms, and the objectification of women (Smith-Shomade 70).

Subsequently, music videos are created by directors and artists from various backgrounds. Music videos are also targeted to viewers from diverse backgrounds as the main goal is to just make profit. As a result, there are a range of images portrayed in music videos of Black women. Even though these images vary, there are still some similarities of the way Black women are portrayed in music videos.

In terms of career development, the roles of Black women are extremely limited. When dealing with actual employment, only four music videos demonstrated women working in the public realm. Black women were seen working as a gas tank filler, restaurant server, and band players. There are, however, some benefits and harmful consequences of such images. The benefits is that Black women are seen being employed in an occupation that is usually male-dominated. There are not too many

women overall who are involved in the fuel industry, let alone Black women.

Additionally, alternate images are still being demonstrated of Black women in the workforce. The harmful consequences consist of the typical occupational positions that Black women are placed. A restaurant server is a usual image of Black women in mass media. Additionally, another harmful consequence is the way these Black women are sexualized due to the Jezebel stereotype. The Black women portrayed as gas tank fillers and restaurant servers had their body parts (e.g. breasts, hips, buttocks) exposed or emphasized. Consequently, there is this constant image of the Black female being active in the public realm, but her work will not be noticed unless she is sexualized.

The majority of Black women are passive in music videos. There are also many Black women who are active; but many of their activities focus on the comfort and pleasure of the male figure. In order to study the passivity and activity in music videos in detail, the dimensions of the public and private realms are emphasized. Despite the location (public vs. private) of Black women in music, their entire sense of functionality is centered on the male. Thus, in the private realm Black women were mainly located in the household. More importantly, the vast majority of Black women were located in the bedroom and kitchen. Once again, these locations that Black women are consistently located speak to the duties and obligations of women in music videos. Black women's main role in the house is always satisfying the male. Whether this includes providing intimacy in the bedroom or nourishment for the body in the kitchen, the entire essence of the idealized Black female is to please the Black male. Subsequently, the private functions of most Black women consisted of providing sexual gifts, modeling, and

socializing. Black women in the public realm are mostly located in clubs, parties, parks, restaurants, streets, and outside buildings. Many Black women's functionality, however, are still centered on the needs and wants of the Black male. Black women in the public realm are seen as partying associates, escorts, car accessories, strippers, and seductive dancers. Thus, the Black woman is located in various public locations, but her functionality still demonstrate endorse a patriarchic structure.

Given the nature of the relationships between Black women and men, the relationships in music videos were also analyzed. The frequency of types of relationships was associated with the prevalence of stereotypes in music videos. In the music videos coded, Black women mainly embodied the Sapphire and Jezebel stereotype. There were also a few music videos that demonstrated the Mammy stereotype. The Superwomen stereotype was completely nonexistent. Subsequently, the majority of relationships were sexualized and confrontational. Other rare forms of relationships demonstrated are the subordinate and caring/supportive types. The controlling form of relationship was nonexistent.

From the correlation of relationships and stereotypes, it is obvious that the Jezebel stereotype has the most frequency in music videos. Many of the music videos had sexualized relations between men and women. In *Dancing On Me* by Jim Jones, DJ Webster, and Juelz Santa, the fifth verse states the following:

Pull up to the club and the lambo was looking sweet,
Don't know about you but her hands was on me,
Then she start to feel that the hammer was on me
But she wanted to lick the rapper like candy was on me.

In *Always Strapped* by Birdman and Lil' Wayne, the first verse states the following:

Top chopped sent da car to the barbershop,
My driveway looks somethin' like a parkin' lot
I'm so unorthodox, I got your bitch ridin' my dick with no socks
(Bounce bitch, bounce, bounce)

Subsequently, the Sapphire stereotype was demonstrated in music videos that talked about relationships and dealing with infidelity. Basically, when a male is caught cheating there are no excuses for a women to stay with him. There is a narrative story consistent throughout many of the music videos centered on problematic relationships where the male would cheat, the female would find out, pack her bags, and the male would regret that he even thought of cheating. Essentially, the Sapphire stereotype demonstrated throughout problematic relationships are empowering to Black women. Even though many of the music videos are directed through a male gaze, they show that Black women are worth more than staying in a relationship with uncommitted men. These music videos with problematic relationships show Black women as confrontational and not accepting the actions of their cheating significant other. The Black female is in control of her future. She is independent and don't need a male figure for any sort of satisfaction. In the third verse of *Last Chance*, Genuwine convey this form of relationship narrative:

Sometimes I try to front like it don't matter,
If you leave or stay, like I can find better
But the truth be told I know you're the one
Girl its plain to see that, I aint nothing without ya
And it seems like every song on the radio is about ya, girl
So stay on home, where you belong,
So I can try to make some right out this wrong

There is also another music video by Letoya Luckett entitled *Not Any*. The lyrics in the second verse and chorus demonstrate a sense of the entitlement of self-worth to Black women by withstanding a cheating man's desires.

Mmm, no more settling for less
I'm looking for that kind of man,
That's gonna give his best, cause I'm giving my best
A man that wants to cherish this
And knows exactly how to woo me
Not some silly little boy
Who wants my goodies cause he took me to the movies

Somebody say, I don't want it anymore
I don't want it anymore
Somebody say, I don't want it anymore
Cause I've dried my eyes and I realized
I deserve somebody that'll treat me right
Somebody say, I don't want it anymore
I don't want it anymore
Somebody say, I don't want it anymore
I don't want it anymore
Because I know my worth, so you can keep,
That drama, I don't want it anymore

Letoya Luckett who is a Black woman actively rejecting the standards given to her by a male figure is empowering. This Sapphire is demonstrating her independency through the emasculation of her former male lover. Her music video conveys that the male figure is not needed when they don't meet up to the expectations of a loyal and supportive significant other. The relationship narrative in music videos are empowering in the sense that they emphasize the worth of Black women so that their standards are elevated in finding a significant other. However, this same relationship narrative reinforces the characteristics of the Sapphire stereotype where she emasculates the Black male and refutes his significance.

There were a few music videos that convey the Mammy stereotype; however, the prevalence is insignificant. The Mammy stereotypes didn't have any active role. Instead, their images were only demonstrated in one music video for a quick second usually during family barbeques or gatherings holding a child. The image of the child reaffirms her nurturing and supportive abilities. Subsequently, the Superwoman stereotype was overall nonexistent in music videos. This is mainly because women were not seen rearing children or going to work. Instead, the Black's main concern was catering to the male.

What does this say about Black womanhood and family formation? Essentially, the Black women are seen as inferior to men. Their positions in music videos are rarely empowering. Frequently, Black women are degraded to their sexuality and confrontational behaviors during conflicts in relationships. Music videos convey that Black women are marvelous sex toys because they are skilled in dealing with their sexuality. How could a Black woman not be sexually skilled, when all of her being is centered on sexually pleasing the male? This idealized Black woman has not authoritative positions in the workforce. There are also limited images of the Black woman being a mother. The restrictive images in music videos limited Black women's possibilities to perceive higher standards. There are some videos that speak to the upliftment and worth of women. However, many of these music videos objectify women and speaks to the entire worth of the Black women overall as simply an object to men.

Conclusion/Implications

The images of Black women in printed and electronic forms of media have devastating consequences once they are internalized. Adolescent and young Black ladies absorb these stereotypical images and mistake them as reality. Unfortunately, since these stereotypes are historical they have already been integrated in the minds of the old and young. However, there needs to be more images of Black women that provide diversity in imagery. Not all Black women need to meet the European standards of beauty, emasculate the Black male, or become a career woman. Stay-at-home mothers and housewives are also incremental to the maintenance of society. Their experiences need to be recognized and also idealized. Black women and women overall need to be appreciated and not stereotyped. Society needs to realize that every individual and their preferences, motivations, objectives, and standards are different. There is no universal experience, beauty, or attitude for any segment of society. Once this notion is realized, then society would be able to progress in relationships between different races, ethnicities, and cultures.

REFERENCES

- Allers, Kimberly. "Real Love." Essence Magazine. Nov 2005: 191-92.
- Arango, Tim. "Essence Editor Is Leaving Magazine." Dec 2007. 1-2.
- Bell, Ella L.J. Edmondson. "When You're An Expectant Mom." Essence Magazine. Nov 2003: 128.
- Bell, Victoria K. "Where's Daddy?" Essence Magazine. Jun 2003: 164-168.
- BET Networks. 106 & Park About. 25 November 2009.
<http://www.bet.com/OnTV/BETShows/106andpark/106andpark_about_article>.
- Bush, Vanessa. "Not Until My Wedding." Essence Magazine. Dec 2003: 187-88.
- Charles, Nick. "Why Good Men Cheat." Essence Magazine. Jan 2003: 104-107.
- Emerson, Rana A. "Where My Girls At? Negotiating Black Womanhood in Music Videos." Gender and Society 16 (2002): 115-135.
- Federal Glass Ceiling Commission. "The Glass Ceiling." Workplace/Women's Place. Ed. Paula J. Dubeck & Dana Dunn. California: Roxbury Publishing Company, 2006. 88-94.
- Freeman, Sue J.M. "Parental Influence and Women's Careers." Workplace/Women's Place. Ed. Paula J. Dubeck & Dana Dunn. California: Roxbury Publishing Company, 2006. 18-27.
- Gordy, Cynthia, Habtezhgi, Nazenut. "Do Right Men." Essence Magazine. Aug 2006: 141-165.
- Graham, Lettice. "Age Is Nothing But A Number." Essence Magazine. Jan 2003: 92-97.
- Jakes, T.D. "No Man Can Make You Happy." Essence Magazine. Feb 2003: 210.
- Jewell, Sue K. From Mammy To Miss America and Beyond: Cultural Images and The Shaping of US Social Policy. New York: Routledge, 1993.

- Kelley, Robin D.G. Yo' Mama's Disfunktional!: Fighting the Culture Wars in Urban America. Boston: Beacon Press, 1997.
- Kennelly, Ivy. "That Single-Mother Element: How White Employers Typify Black Women." Gender and Society 13 (1999): 168-192.
- McElya, Micki. Clinging To Mammy: The Faithful Slave In Twentieth-Century America. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2007.
- Miguel, Celia San. "Crib Notes." VIBE Magazine. May 2006: 72.
- Morgan, Joan. "Fly-Girls, Bitches, and Hoes: Notes of a Hip-Hop Feminist." Social Text 45 (1995): 151-157.
- Morgan, Joan. When Chickenheads Come Home to Roost: My Life as a Hip Hop Feminist. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1999.
- N.S. "To Spank or Not To Spank?" Essence Magazine. Jan 2003: 19.
- Oware, Matthew. "A Man's Woman?: Contradictory Messages in the Songs of Female Rappers, 1992-2000." Journal of Black Studies 39 (2009): 786-802.
- Reynolds-Dobbs, Wendy, Thomas, Kecia M., and Harrison, Matthew S. "From Mammy to Superwoman: Images That Hinder Black Women's Career Development." Journal of Career Development 35 (2008): 129-150.
- Rooks, Noliwe. Black Women's Magazines and the Culture That Made Them. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2004.
- Saunders, Nichole. "My Sister's Keeper." Essence Magazine. May 2003: 40.
- Smalls, Linda Lee. "What White Women Are Really Saying About Us?" Essence Magazine. Mar 2003: 152-155.
- Smith-Shomade, Beretta. Shaded Lives: Black Women and Television. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2002.
- Solomon, Akiba. "Like A Virgin." Essence Magazine. Sept 2006: 150.
- Thomas, Anita J., Witherspoon, Karen M., Speight, Suzette L. "Toward the Development of the Stereotypic Roles for Black Women Scale." Journal of Black Psychology 30 (2004): 426-442.
- VIBE Lifestyle Network. About VIBE Lifestyle Network. 25 November 2009.

<<http://www.VIBE.com/about/>>

West, Carolyn M. "Mammy, Sapphire, and Jezebel: Historical Images of Black Women and Their Implications for Psychotherapy." Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, Practice, Training 32 (1995): 458-466.

Woodard, Jennifer B. "Black Womanhood: *Essence* and its Treatment of Stereotypical Images of Black Women." Journal of Black Studies 36 (2005): 264-281.

Youngblood, S., Lord, M. "How I Became My Own Lover." Essence Magazine. Feb 2005: 24, 198.